Golf US Masters

O'Meara steals his first major

David Davies at Augusta

MARK O'Meara, in amazing circumstances, holed a 20-foot birdie putt on the 72nd hole to win the title at the Augusta National Golf Club last Sunday and register his first major championship.

The winning putt looked to be missing the left edge for a large part of its journey but it straightened at the last moment, caught the rim and fell in. The Floridan was enveloped by his caddie and appeared to be close to tears.

The putt gave him a round of 67, after birdies at three of the last four holes, and a total of 279 — nine under par. He went to the presentation ceremony to have the Green Jacket placed around his shoulders by the defending champion — and his best friend in professional golf — Tiger Woods.

O'Meara finished one ahead of Fred Couples and David Duval, with Jim Furyk a further stroke behind.

As overnight leader Couples was keen to prove that you have to win two majors in order to be numbered among the great. When David Toms, a US Tour journeyman, posted a round of 64, he set a target of 283.

Almost incredibly the 58-year-old Jack Nicklaus was among those jousting for the title. One under overnight, Nicklaus went to the turn in 33 and at that point was only three behind Couples.

The applause for Nicklaus really started when he hit a big drive off the 1st. No longer was it the polite acknowledgement of a golfing superstar — this was urgent and emotional support for a man in contention.

He birdied the long 2nd and then, at the 3rd, he was just short of the green in two. His chip, which had a huge borrow, ran gently curving into the hole, and the great man did a mock stagger of astonishment.

At the short 4th he was through the green, to drop a shot, but putts of 6ft and 10ft at the next two holes both brought birdies. Another at the long 8th and even the leading men 25 years his junior would surely feel the breath of the Bear. But he could not get up in two: his chip, which pitched 8ft from the hole, spun back to 20ft, and he could not hole from there.

As he walked on to the 9th tee he was sweating hard and puffing, but he hit two good approach shots and, with the easiest putt on that devilish green, missed from 8ft. If that was a disappointment a three-putt at the 12th proved terminal. Having run the first one down to 3ft, Nicklaus hit that one 4ft past, and his momentum slowed. He had needed a round without any mistakes and that was not now going to happen. Nicklaus did birdie both the long holes, the 13th and 15th, but his progress now depended on others losing their way.



Watch the birdie . . . American Mark O'Meara celebrates victory on the 18th green at Augusta PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID CANNON

Couples was one of the leading pack who did just that. When he won in 1992 he was ridiculously lucky at the short 12th. After underhitting his tee shot, the ball started to roll down the bank to Rae's Creek — and then stopped halfway down. This time Couples could be heard urging his tee-shot to "get down", and it only just did, stopping a yard or so short of the bunker at the back. He made his par.

But it was not long before the creek came into play. Couples hit a terrible tee shot at the 13th, deep into the woods on the left, a site unseen even by old Augusta hands. He managed a miraculous escape in one blow but then blew his luck by hitting what was, in the circumstances, an even more terrible shot than the drive, into the creek at the front of the green. There was no chance at all of playing it. He hit a poor pitch from the drop zone and that meant a double-bogey seven. The creek had caught up with him, and for the first time since the first round he was not the leader.

That position lasted just two holes. A towering long iron second at the 15th gave Couples a 3ft eagle putt, which he rolled in as if nothing untoward had happened. He was now level, at eight under, with Duval.

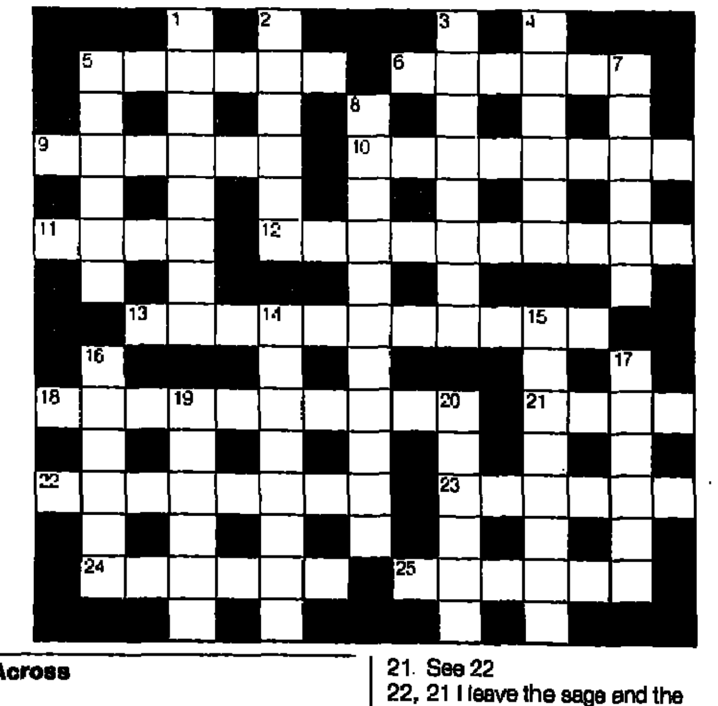
All the time, though, O'Meara was cruising quietly along. He birdied the 15th, just as Duval was dropping a shot at the 16th. When O'Meara then birdied the 17th, from 8ft, he joined the pack of eight-unders.

The leading Europeans were Darren Clarke and Colin Montgomerie, both at three under par, alongside Woods. Clarke said: "I came here to make the cut. To get into the top 10 is just wonderful."

Lee Westwood, whose only remaining ambition at the start was to get into the top 24, instead went into reverse. His round of 78 left him reflecting that, while he had fallen in love with the course last year, "this year it felt like being in the divorce courts. Maybe I'm a little wiser. At least I know more places not to hit the ball".

Per-Ulrik Johansson, after a 70, and Jose Maria Olazábal, after a 72, both ended two-under, and Ian Woosnam finished with a 70, for one under, alongside Ernie Els.

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria



Across

5 Born Welch, left off being a 7, a 2 with twisted tail (6)
6 Dance round circle at US city to see fair play? (4-2)
9 Some surprises Elizabeth has in the Herbal Bed? (6)
10 Determination in a friend to be a 12 7 (8)
11 County that may plume itself? (4)
12 County cut short a table with subconscious inspiration (10)
13 It reduces noise in flight (5-6)
18 Translating Dante, class used Murdoch's work (10)
21 See 22
22, 21 I leave the sage and the golden boy returns: I am a 12 7 (8,4)
23 Flitch town losing first point before the reaper's been (6)
24 Beat fellow to turn into pungent 12 7 (6)
25 12 7 that produced Queen Katherine (6)

Down

1 Nuts about Northern king turning up as 12 7 (3,5)
2 Young creature with its former measures (6)
3 French minstrel's run — "le jog", possibly (8)
4 A climb to a posh pub — I shall often go with 11 (6)
5 12 7 native to North-Western France (6)
7 Work person, as it were, released from strait (6)
8 A Conservative before there were Conservatives, I am starting swearing (11)
14 Erratic summary of what one of Jaques' players had (2-3-3)
15 Injure a sorcerer after it's all over (8)
16 Don't possess (as they say) a Hampshire town (6)
17 Pay an informal visit to the base among the rubbish? (4,2)
19 Discover by guess or by God? (6)
20 12 7 from Egypt in the sixties, in the distant past (6)

Last week's solution

ABSCOND JACKPOT
N E K E U O O I
GASTROPOD UTTER
E T I A G N I A
RAIL PRIESTHOOD
N K T F S N E
GATEAU ONASSIS
N R R S
DIOPTRE OLIVER
E V I L N E T
BRAMSTOKER CHAT
R T H U S E I H
IDIOM NIETZSCHE
E O A G L R A W
FINANCE FRAILTY

Motor Racing Argentine Grand Prix

Schumacher strikes again

Alan Henry in Buenos Aires

MICHAEL Schumacher scored a brilliant tactical victory for Ferrari here last Sunday, taking advantage of an early blunder by race favourite David Coulthard to dominate from the fifth lap to the 72nd.

It was the first time that the Italian team had won in Argentina since the legendary Juan Manuel Fangio triumphed in 1956 at the wheel of a Lancia-Ferrari D50.

Coulthard's world championship hopes were dramatically hit when Schumacher closed in on him and challenged for the lead while braking for one of the tight in-field hairpins on lap five. The Scot ran wide on the entrance, allowing Schumacher to slice inside, then closed the door on the Ferrari which resulted in the McLaren-Mercedes being launched into a half-spin over the left front wheel of its rival.

Coulthard resumed in 12th place, eventually climbing back to sixth at the chequered flag — quite an achievement considering he was briefly rammed off the circuit by Jacques Villeneuve's Williams during their battle for seventh place.

Schumacher got the best out of the long-awaited new wide Goodyear front tyres fitted to his Ferrari, winning by more than 22 seconds from Mika Hakkinen's McLaren despite making two scheduled stops to the Finn's one. The turning point came on lap 53, when Schumacher emerged from his second stop 4.6sec ahead of Hakkinen, who had not been able to make up sufficient ground with his one-stop strategy to get ahead.

Hakkinen then lost seven seconds on lap 68, with only four laps to go, when a rain shower brushed the circuit, frustrating his efforts to capitalise on Schumacher's error when he slid on to the gravel trap just before the start/finish line.

In third place Eddie Irvine did a good job in the second Ferrari, battling hard with the Benetton of Alexander Wurz in the closing stages.

Fifth place went to Jean Alesi's Sauber-Ferrari, the Frenchman continuing despite one of his car's secondary side-mounted wings being accidentally ripped off during a refuelling stop.

The Williams team continued its disappointing form, with Villeneuve spinning off after colliding with Coulthard on lap 53, while Heinz-Harald Frentzen wound up ninth after being forced to make an extra pit stop when he incurred a 10sec stop-go penalty for speeding in the pit lane.

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Death of a tyrant . . . A Khmer Rouge soldier lights the funeral pyre of Pol Pot in the Cambodian forest near the Thai border. The Khmer leader, whose reign of terror in the 1970s took the lives of 2 million Cambodians, died of a heart attack last week. His body was put on display before being cremated PHOTO: AP

Pol Pot: the monster we created

John Pilger witnessed Cambodia's killing fields. He says Pol Pot's backers, China and the West, must also be held to account

IN THE silent humidity of Cambodia in the summer of 1979, houses, office blocks, hotels and schools stood empty. In the ruined National Bank, blown up by the retreating Khmer Rouge, a pair of spectacles rested on a ledger.

When the afternoon rains broke, the streets ran with money as thousands of new banknotes were washed into the gutter. Orphans collected and dried them for fuel; the money crackled as it burned.

As if in a mirage, a pyramid of vehicles rose on a football field. It included an ambulance, a fire engine and police cars, plus refrigerators, washing machines, television sets, telephones and typewriters.

Since April 17, 1975 — Year Zero in the calendar of Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge leader — anybody who owned such possessions, anybody who lived in a city or town, anybody who knew or worked with foreigners had been in mortal danger.

More than a million and a half had died — although recent discoveries of mass graves by a Yale university team suggest that this figure may be a gross underestimate. During the three years and eight months that they held power, Pol Pot and his medievalists may have put to death a third of the nation.

It is too easy and too dangerous to remember Pol Pot as a unique monster. The truth is that he and the Khmer Rouge would be historical nonentities — and a great many people would be alive today — had the United States not helped bring them to power, had the governments of the US, Britain, China and Thailand not supported, armed and sustained them.

The iconic images of the piles of skulls from the killing fields ought to include those who, often at great remove in distance and culture, were Pol Pot's accessories and Faustian partners for their own imperial purposes.

To hear Henry Kissinger last week deny that the US, and especially the Nixon administration, bore any responsibility for Cambodia's horror was to hear the truth denigrated and our intelligence insulted.

For Cambodia's nightmare did not begin with Year Zero. It began on the eve of the US land invasion of neutral Cambodia in 1970, when Richard Nixon said to Kissinger, his secretary of state: "If this doesn't work, it'll be your ass, Henry." It worked — after a fashion. The invasion provided a small group of extreme ethnic nationalists with Maoist pretensions, the Khmer Rouge, with a catalyst for a revolution that had no popular base among the Cambodian people.

Between 1969 and 1973, US bombers killed perhaps 750,000 Cambodian peasants in an attempt to destroy North Vietnamese supply bases, many of which did not exist.

During one six-month period in 1973, B-52s dropped more bombs on Cambodians than were dropped on Japan during the second world war.

Evidence from US official documents, declassified in 1987, leaves no doubt that this American terror was critical in Pol Pot's drive for power. "They are using [the bombing] as the main theme of their propaganda," reported the CIA director of operations on May 2, 1973. "This approach has resulted in the successful recruitment of a number of young men [and] the propaganda has been most effective among refugees subjected to B-52 strikes."

What Kissinger and Nixon had begun, Pol Pot completed. Had the US and China allowed it, Cambodia's suffering could have stopped when Vietnam finally responded to years of Khmer Rouge attacks across its border and liberated the country in January 1979. But almost immediately the US began secretly backing Pol Pot in exile. By January 1980 the US was funding Pol Pot's beaten forces in Thailand.

The extent of this support — $85 million from 1980-86 — was only revealed six years later. In November 1980 direct contact was made between the Reagan White House and the Khmer Rouge when Ray Cline, a former deputy director of the CIA, made a clandestine visit to Pol Pot's operational base inside Cambodia.

Cline was then a foreign policy adviser to president-elect Ronald Reagan. Within a year some 50 CIA agents were running the secret US war against Vietnamese-occupied Cambodia from the US embassy in Bangkok and along the Thai-Cambodian border.

Washington's aim was to appease China, the great Soviet foe and Pol Pot's most enduring backer, and to use a rehabilitated Khmer Rouge to bring pressure on the source of their recent humiliation in the

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Middle East talks switch to London

Lucy Ward in Gaza City and David Sharrock in Jerusalem

TONY BLAIR hailed a breakthrough in the Middle East peace process on Monday when American invitations to a meeting in London on May 4 were accepted by the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, and Israel's prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu.

After talks with Mr Blair in Gaza, Mr Arafat said the British prime minister's visit had "restored hope" to the Palestinians.

However, Palestinians and Israelis have serious reservations about what can be achieved at the London meeting.

Mr Blair has been keen to stress that his initiative should not "cut across" proposals put forward by the United States to restart the peace process and accelerate moves towards a final settlement. The talks have been stalled for a year over Israeli plans to build Jewish settlements on occupied land and by Islamic suicide bombings.

The Israelis have balked at the US plan for a 13 per cent withdrawal from the West Bank and a freeze on settlement construction, and Palestinians insist that, contrary to Israeli claims, they are doing all they can to combat Islamic militants.

"I hope very much in the next few weeks there will be meetings that can take place, whether it's in London or elsewhere, where people can hammer out an agreement," Mr Blair told school students in Gaza. He said the meetings should tackle how the parties could meet outstanding obligations under interim peace deals before moving on to negotiations on a final settlement.

The Israeli and Palestinian leaders are expected to meet separately in London with the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, to discuss the main land-for-peace agenda.

Mr Blair held a final round of discussions with Mr Netanyahu on Tuesday before returning home, his five-day tour of the Middle East apparently garlanded with success.

"There is no doubt that people here have been impressed by what we have been able to achieve in Ulster," he said. "It showed to the leaders here that we had something concrete to offer and has helped clear the logjam."

However, Ahmed Tibi, a senior Arafat aide, accused Mr Netanyahu of playing games. "The prime minister is interested in having as many meetings as possible so that he can come out and tell reporters that there is progress," Mr Tibi told Israeli army radio. "The point is that the prime minister has to agree to the American proposals on the agenda, on redeployment, on the cessation of unilateral actions, including settlement building."

Mr Netanyahu was non-committal about what ground the London talks would cover. "We have talked of a number of possibilities. They involve the bilateral working out of problems, but I prefer to wait until Mr Blair has a chance to complete his rounds," he said.

A cabinet statement, however, dampened expectations of a London breakthrough. "We are not talking about European mediation or an international conference, but the possibility of a meeting which would take place in Europe," it said.

Mr Netanyahu's rightwing justice minister, Tsahi Hanegbi, added: "The British are not supposed to be involved in direct negotiations between us and the Palestinians. They would host a meeting and by doing so perhaps gain some prestige, which would not cost us anything."

Egypt's foreign minister Amr Moussa summed up the mood of Arab leaders when he said he was sceptical about the value of a London meeting unless Mr Netanyahu accepted Washington's plan. Israeli policy was only "to enter into circles and waste as much time as possible".

It is not lack of will that prevents Mr Netanyahu from acting: his problem is parliamentary arithmetic. The smaller voices in his coalition, those which still dream of Greater Israel, now wield disproportionate power. They are holding the majority of Israelis to ransom.

However much pressure Washington can bring to bear in the coming weeks, there can be no fundamental breakthrough this side of a general election.

Even more depressingly, the rise of the religious right and the fragmentation of the old political hegemony into a kaleidoscope of special and ethnic interest groups spells further disaster for the left, where the Oslo enthusiasts dwell.

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 600	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80

Bean-counters deliver a blow to NZ's future

YOUR recent reports on the effect of market forces gone berserk in New Zealand are both accurate and timely (April 12, March 15). Such is the sway of New Right ideology here that politicians and commentators now speak of the health, arts and education "industries" without apparent discomfort.

The disastrous power loss in central Auckland and the ever-growing waiting lists for surgery have been the most visible consequences to date, but the ticking of other time bombs gets ever louder. The myopia of the bean-counters is now threatening our already precarious world position in science and technology. New Zealand's investment in research and development, currently at 0.59 per cent of the GDP, has always been well below the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development's average of 0.80 per cent. Even more alarming is the persistent reluctance of New Zealand businesses to invest in research and development; among the OECD countries, New Zealand boasts the lowest proportion of high and medium technology exports by a considerable margin.

New Zealand's science and research policy was overhauled in the early 1990s, with the creation of Crown Research Institutes (CRIs) from the former discipline-based institutes and the establishment of the ominously-named Public Good Science Fund (PGSF). Then the stated intention was to raise government input to the OECD mean, and encourage greater private investment in development. Of course other priorities have long since overtaken the former commitment.

The PGSF's title is not the only aspect of the reforms reminiscent of the Soviet Union. Bids to the PGSF must demonstrate "relevance" to the New Zealand economy before a high quality of science, and documentation from the government office responsible for administration speaks of "purchasers", "providers", "outputs" and "contracts". As it is now politicians, administrators and accountants who decide what is science for the public good, scientists have been effectively reduced to contract seasonal workers somewhat akin to fruit pickers.

The effect of all this? A substantial proportion of the country's top scientific brainpower and tax revenue is now devoted to achieving such revolutionary breakthroughs as the removal of sap stains from pinewood or assessing the effect of motorway spray on the performance of solar cells (both are genuine examples). Not surprisingly, business is now even less inclined to co-operate in endeavours of this calibre than before. Although there is considerable anecdotal evidence of a decline in morale among scientists in both the CRIs and the universities, the former are contractually barred from making public statements critical of government policy.

Douglas Russell,
Auckland, New Zealand

Hopes ride on Irish peace

LIKE millions of Irish people I have nervously watched the past few weeks unfold in Northern Ireland (Mitchell warns of terrorist threat to Irish peace deal, April 19). At 34, my memories have never included peace-time in Ireland. It is remarkable to think that we could be on the verge of achieving this.

I have immense respect for my country, its people and its past. However, I believe, as many other young Irish men and women do, that our loyalty to the past, admirable as it may be, has stopped us from moving forward. Hopefully Easter 1998 will now make its way into the history books as the time peace was found in Northern Ireland.

Eilish Doherty,
Sydney, Australia

INCREDIBLY, then, there is a deal. This represents a triumph for politics over violence. The question now is whether the parties' respective constituencies will be similarly far-sighted.

David Trimble faces the hardest job in selling this deal. He has not moved as far as Gerry Adams, but he has given up things he held, not things he felt he was entitled to. He must try to sell his position as a success, given his leadership role within the new assembly; Adams can just go along grudgingly.

If the Ulster people bring this agreement down, it should be made clear to them that the British government will no longer be in a position to fund the entire costs of security and the expense of policing contentious parades.

Nick Martin-Clark,
London

A RETHINK of attitudes to Europe would offer exciting possibilities. We need to move beyond our politically illiterate attitude to a European federal unit based on regions. Imagine a situation in which England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were contributing members of a federal Europe. And imagine the effects this would have on relationships between our communities.

The European Court could help resolve problems, and subsidiarity, together with social and economic convergence, could be powerful progressive forces.

J R Turner,
Telford, Shropshire

Too close for comfort

PETER PRESTON'S piece on the close links between the United States and all its cultural colonies deserves our close attention (Little Rock seems closer than Calais, April 5). It seems to me that a suitable metaphorical representation for the US is the cuckoo — it grows too big for the nest it usurps and destroys what provides its support. Like all bullies it needs standing up to, which at least the French have attempted to do.

While there is much that is fine about the US until it develops some socio-psychological awareness of its place in the world and learns that there are other cultures of distinct value, it must remain the cuckoo and not the eagle. "The US right or wrong" is symptomatic of the naive approach to world affairs that has led to considerable embarrassment for the US in many of its worldwide adventures. The ignorance of most of US citizens about the rest of the world has been documented many times, most recently in the suggestion that US media are to concentrate yet more strongly on home-produced and home-focused material — strange really for a country that has been the long-term host for mass immigration.

However, the dependence of politicians on such an essentially uninformed electorate reinforces insularity and conformism, the gun culture, the vengeful society seen in the increasing numbers of executions across the country and to a rampant capitalist ethic in which money is all and where, as Jim Hoagland (April 12) points out, "social justice, the integrity of our leaders, US leadership in the world . . . have . . . been driven to the margins".

So much for the claims that the US is the freest or most democratic country. These features, in turn, allow free rein to those who provide the superficialities that are the cultural exports about which Preston worries.

David Blest,
University of Tasmania,
Launceston, Australia

PETER PRESTON is quite right: the United States is a "deeply foreign land" which has been made to feel artificially familiar to consumers of American mass culture worldwide. Britain has been particularly fertile soil because of shared language and historical ties, factors that have been exploited to the full by the likes of Rupert Murdoch, who owns US entertainment factories and media outlets, for their products on both sides of the Atlantic.

Britain's continental neighbours in their (relative) enthusiasm for the pan-European ideal seem more mindful than the British of the fact that European geopolitical and ethnic rivalries have been responsible for the biggest mass slaughter in human history. In the final analysis, that doleful history is why Little Rock should not be allowed to seem closer than Calais.

Nigel Bramwell,
Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA

Cold stare of Russian history

W L WEBB, the reviewer, and D M Thomas, the author, have got a few things right about Solzhenitsyn (Voice of history, April 5). But comparing him to Lenin is like comparing a fireman to an arsonist because they were both at the fire.

The rather lurid quote from Thomas's book, which conjures "Lenin and Solzhenitsyn, staring cold-eyed at each other across the corpse-filled gorge of the 20th century", seems to imply that someone other than Lenin put those corpses there. Conjury indeed. Lenin detested Russia; Solzhenitsyn is nothing if not a Russian patriot and a nationalist.

Lenin murdered and incarcerated possibly millions; Solzhenitsyn effectively eulogised and immortalised all those dead in The Gulag Archipelago, having first spent a good deal of his life in the concentration camps founded by the fellow "across the gorge".

But the greatest absurdity comes at the end of the article. Whether Webb's gaff or Thomas's I know not, but to turn Solzhenitsyn's mastodon — frozen in the ice and hacked and eaten instantly upon discovery by starving prisoners — into a salamander is a sleight-of-hand that inspires little confidence in all the author's other observations.

Alexander Maidan,
Toronto, Canada

Briefly

THE United Nations Development Programme administrator, James Speth, stresses that "a consensus [on development aid] has been forged to *include* the developing countries" (April 12). If the UNDP has to draw attention to the fact that its main constituency has actually been *included* in strategic planning, we need look no further for the causes of failure. Incidentally, the consensus, forged by the European Union and UNDP, is "to promote private enterprise, human rights and democracy" — in that order presumably.

Alison Martin Katz,
Geneva, Switzerland

WITH the forest fires in Brazil the curtain goes up on the final act in the tragedy of the Amazon Indians, traditionally the stewards of that part of our ecosystem (March 29). However, the fires there and in Asia are a tragedy for us all. By any criterion — whether it is the plight of the Yanomami, the importance of forests to the global ecology, the devastation caused by the fires beyond national boundaries, or the forests' value to multinational corporations and therefore to many of the world's developed economies — enlightened self-interest dictates that the nations of the world should unite to pour physical and financial resources into these regions in order to combat the infernos.

Nigel Lindup,
Geneva, Switzerland

THE article about the Millennium Dome stated that the project "lacks a grand idea" (March 8). An appropriate theme would be an ecological one: namely, how can we protect the global environment and hence guarantee the survival of the human species for another 1,000 years? It would be inspiring to young people and could be the showcase for many new technologies. By adopting such a theme, the organisers of the Dome exhibition could counter charges that it is a hugely expensive irrelevance.

Neil McCutcheon,
Tumu, Upper West Region, Ghana

ADRIAN SEARLE, in his piece on Henri Cartier-Bresson, complains about him being "cloistered" from the world (February 22). But a photographer travels in a kind of isolation bubble because he must separate himself from the scene in order to see it; to be constantly outside, looking in. Searle doubts that "the world can fall into place so readily . . . so spontaneously". Well, it can and does a thousand times a minute, or second, but is gone in an instant. The trick is to be there, and ready, when it does.

Ken Straiton,
Tokyo, Japan

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Afghan foes agree truce

Suzanne Goldenberg in Kabul

THE Americans came bearing pens; the Afghans welcomed them with rolls of carpets and the hides of small animals. But by the time the day of diplomacy came to an end last week, President Clinton's special envoy had extracted a promise of a ceasefire and peace negotiations from men who have been making war for a generation.

"It appears to be a breakthrough," Bill Richardson, the United States ambassador to the United Nations, said after a three-hour meeting with Mullah Mohammed Rabbani, the acting president of the Islamist Taliban militia, which controls the capital, Kabul, and most of Afghanistan.

He said the Taliban and the northern alliance, who rule the country's north, had agreed to a ceasefire before direct talks, to be held under UN auspices in Islamabad this week — exactly 20 years after the communist revolution started Afghanistan on its path of destruction.

They had also agreed to exchange prisoners and allow the UN to carry out humanitarian activities. However, on Monday talks between the UN and the Taliban on resuming aid were called off after the Afghans accused the UN's aid co-ordinator of being opposed to their policies.

Mr Richardson said that the Taliban, who have earned opprobrium for their harsh treatment of women, had agreed to let female doctors work and women resume their education. However, the extent of the gains is uncertain: women doctors already treat female patients, though in separate hospitals that are in a miserable condition, and the Taliban have said that women will be allowed to go to university once segregated institutions have been built.

Mr Richardson is the most senior US official to visit Afghanistan since Henry Kissinger in 1974. "President Clinton wants peace in Afghanistan," he said. "We don't want to look at the past, we want to look at the future. We want America to take part in the reconstruction of Afghanistan."

That is what the people of Jeday Mayan, in southern Kabul, are hoping. The district has been bombed so relentlessly that only a few walls survive. "If peace comes, we can build our houses, everything will be cheap, and my children can go to school," said Bibi Zada, her voice muffled by the blue chador that completely enclosed her and which the Taliban decrees all Afghan women must wear.

Amid the devastation, Mr Richardson had his first encounter with the Taliban's puritanism: an austere welcome at the airport by junior officials, and a reminder to the press accompanying him that photography of the human form is banned.

The Americans soon left the capital's ruins behind, flying over the snow-capped peaks of the Hindu Kush to encounter the relics of the former communist regime in the northern alliance.

At Sheberghan, the headquarters of General Abdul Rashid Dostam, who provides the military muscle to the opponents of the Taliban, they were greeted by a lavish, officially orchestrated spectacle.

Schoolchildren, clasping bunches of carnations, sang hymns for peace specially written for his visit. Then Mr Richardson faced a razor-sharp line of Gen Dostam's dignitaries: tribal elders in striped robes, air force pilots in camouflage uniforms, and — in a calculated dig at the Taliban — women doctors and teachers.

There was more on the road into town: thousands of people holding aloft pictures of Gen Dostam and banners reading: "We kindly request the US to enhance its efforts for the discontinuation of war in Afghanistan."

The northern alliance was effusive about the prospects for peace. "By the coming of the Americans, I am 80 per cent sure that peace will come to Afghanistan," Gen Dostam said.

But Mr Richardson admitted having doubts about the outcome of talks between the Taliban and the alliance, whose leaders are driven by animosity and mistrust. "It depends on deeds and not just words. But we have made progress."

His caution was shared by Ghulam Farooqi, a Talib fighter in Kabul. "The people are happy that he is here, but we don't know what will come of it. We have seen so many delegations come and go."

Nigeria poll is walkover for Abacha

Matthew Tostevin in Lagos

NIGERIA'S presidential election will be a simple vote of "yes" or "no" for the military ruler, General Sani Abacha, a senior government official said on Tuesday.

Gen Abacha, who seized power in 1993, became the only candidate for the presidential elections in August after winning the nomination of all five registered parties on Monday.

Hassan Yusuf Khalifa of the Transition Implementation Committee, overseeing Nigeria's [illegible]cised plan to restore democracy, said Gen Abacha would still need to face a ballot even after securing the backing of all five parties. "As a consensus candidate there is still a need for him to face election according to the draft constitution," he said. "People should be given the chance to vote yes or no."

Gen Abacha's victory has already been condemned by local opposition and democracy groups, which dismiss the transition plan for restoring democracy to the country.

The United States and Britain quickly attacked the election walkover. "There's nothing about Nigeria's political evolution in the last few months that strikes me as very democratic at all," the US state department spokesman, James Rubin, said in Washington. "It appears that the government of Nigeria is manipulating the transition in order to secure the nomination of General Abacha as the sole candidate."

A minister at Britain's Foreign Office, Tony Lloyd, said: "It is difficult to see how an election in which only a single candidate is put forward by all five registered parties can be judged free, fair and inclusive."

Western countries have hung the threat of a possible extension of mild sanctions over Nigeria unless a semblance of democracy is restored this year. — *Reuters*

Washington Post, page 18



A man collapses as he waits for United Nations food aid to be distributed in Thiekthou, Sudan, where famine has put thousands of people at risk PHOTOGRAPH: CORINNE DUFKA

Botha vents fury on his accusers

Alex Duval Smith in George

SHAKING with rage and shouting "they want to destroy me and my people", P W Botha stormed out of court last week after hearing a second day of damning evidence from official documents, implicating him in apartheid crimes during his time as South Africa's leader.

As the contempt case against the 82-year-old former president was adjourned for six weeks after only one witness was called, he realised he would not, at least for now, be able to refute allegations against him.

Rising from his seat, Mr Botha cursed his lawyers and slammed his fist against the court railings. "I have a right to be protected by the court. Untested accusations have been made by the witness and distributed throughout the world. I saw it on television."

The former prime minister and president had been brought to George regional court, east of Cape Town, for ignoring a subpoena to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). It wants to question him about his chairmanship of the state security council, which directed undercover operations in the 1980s.

Taking the witness stand for the second day, the TRC's executive secretary, Paul van Zyl, leafed through state documents which he said indicated that Mr Botha had created a climate conducive to gross human rights violations and which condoned systematic torture.

Mr van Zyl read from the minutes of one meeting of the state security council, which ordered "the identification and elimination of revolutionary leaders, particularly those with charisma".

Another document ordered the "physical destruction of the revolutionary organisations, to whit people, facilities or funds, inside the country or out, by any overt or covert means necessary". The objective was "to make the rotten areas clean before they become too infected. To establish that requires a lot of violence from our side, regardless of the international reaction".

For each of the 60 or so documents he read from, Mr van Zyl, a lawyer, underlined that the TRC merely wanted to call him to a hearing to clarify Mr Botha's role.

Mr Botha's lawyers attempted to stall the case by frequently asking for further documents to be produced by the TRC. This led the prosecutor, Bruce Morrison, to call for an adjournment to June 1.

It is unlikely now that Mr Botha will ever appear before a TRC hearing since the body's statutory period for calling witnesses expires soon. The TRC is due to report to President Nelson Mandela at the end of July.

The Week

CROWDS of supporters greeted Tehran's mayor, Gholamhossein Karbaschi, on his release after 11 nights in detention. His arrest, on corruption charges, sparked widespread protests and a row between moderates and conservatives.

HOPES of progress in talks between North and South Korea in Beijing were dashed when the two sides failed to agree on a deal to break four years of deadlock.
Le Monde, page 15

COSMIC thunderstorms are raging in the far reaches of space, generating wind speeds of more than 400km a second and temperatures hotter than the Sun.
Solar winds, page 23

AVIATION regulators in the US proposed overhauling the wiring of Boeing 737s after investigations into the crash of a TWA 747 airliner, which exploded near New York in 1996, raised doubts about the safety of the fuel monitoring system.
Fasten seat-belts, page 32

THE International Committee of the Red Cross has managed to send an aid package containing medical supplies, clothes and magazines to 10 relief workers held hostage in Somalia.

BORIS YELTSIN flew to Japan, leaving Russia in the hands of Sergei Kiriyenko, who this week faces a third and final vote of confidence as prime minister in the Duma, the opposition-dominated lower house.

IN A case that has astonished even sleaze-glutted Italians, General Francesco Delfino, one of the country's most senior policemen, was arrested and held on suspicion of profiting from the kidnapping of a friend.

A GENERATION of leftwing terrorism in Germany came to an end when the Red Army Faction, the guerrilla and terrorist organisation born in the radical student revolts of the 1960s, announced it was disbanding.

SUSPECTED separatist guerrillas shot dead 29 people, mostly Hindus, in Kashmir, India's only Muslim majority state.

A BOEING-727 jet with 61 people aboard crashed into mountains on the outskirts of the Colombian capital Bogotá shortly after take-off, leaving no sign of survivors.

THE Nobel prize-winning poet and philosopher Octavio Paz has died in Mexico aged 84.

The US company Monsanto has not called for genetically modified foods to be separated at source, as stated last week (US chemical firm admits PR errors, page 5).

Drugs crops face 'toxic rain' from US

Jeremy Lennard in Bogotá

THE warning is clear: "Caution — Do not apply near desirable trees or other woody species. Exposure of even a small part of a plant root system may cause severe plant injury or death." So reads the labelling on the herbicide Spike 20P, or Tebuthiuron.

But against the advice of Greenpeace, the Worldwide Fund for Nature, and even the manufacturers, Dow Agrosciences, United States officials in Bogotá say Tebuthiuron is their choice to bolster the aerial destruction of coca leaf cultivation deep in Colombia's southern rainforests.

While the debate focuses on Tebuthiuron, which has been successfully used around the world to clear vegetation on roadsides and railway cuttings, many claim that the US is wasting its time and money trying to reduce cocaine production by eradicating coca crops.

Last year one US operative described the fumigation efforts as "pissing in the wind", and US statistics support his view. About 20,000 acres of coca leaf have been fumigated since 1994, but cultivation has steadily risen each year.

The most common criticism is that US measures will not work in the face of fierce demand. The US embassy in Bogotá claims that Washington's anti-narcotics effort is focused on domestic demand, but studies suggest that 65 per cent of the expenditure is aimed at the supply side abroad.

Nevertheless Luis Eduardo Parra, Colombia's environmental assessor for coca eradication, says fumigation must be part of a broader attack. "The majority of ether and acetone needed to produce good quality cocaine is imported from the [illegible]

A report by the National university in Bogotá claims that coca fumigation is counterproductive. Growers move deeper into the jungle and plant more to absorb the risk of losses. Prices are pushed up, adding incentives to traffickers, while, without an economically viable crop replacement scheme, small growers are put out of business, contributing to widespread poverty and a swelling of guerrillas ranks.

US officials say that coca eradication is going well under the circumstances, although they are hampered by harassment from left-wing rebels and problems associated with Glifosate — their current herbicide.

Glifosate is a liquid that cannot be applied in rainy or windy conditions. Pilots are obliged to fly low and slowly, making them vulnerable to guerrilla sniper fire. The advantage of Tebuthiuron, a granular chemical, is that it can be applied in all weathers from a higher altitude.

The US embassy in Bogotá quotes studies by Charles Helling, a scientist in the US ministry of agriculture, which conclude that Tebuthiuron can be used in the rainforest without risk to humans or the environment.

But Dow Agrosciences, which warns that treatment should be well away from surrounding vegetation and that the chemical can easily contaminate ground water, does not want its product tried in Colombia.

"It is our desire that Tebuthiuron not be used for coca eradication," a spokesman for the company said. "It could be very risky where the terrain has slopes, rainfall is significant, desirable plants are nearby, and application is made under less than ideal conditions."

A decision on using Tebuthiuron is expected from Colombia's National Drugs Council this month.

Mr Parra is in favour of its use. "Dow's reluctance to allow Tebuthiuron to be used in Colombia is a result of their experiences in Vietnam, not fears over the chemical itself. The US government stranded the company with the legal fallout from the use of Agent Orange, and they are nervous of a new partnership."

● Colombia's leading human rights lawyer, Eduardo Umana Mendoza, was shot dead in Bogotá last weekend by three people claiming to be journalists.



Police struggle with dockers picketing Port Botany terminal in Sydney, after a truck arriving to collect cargo was turned back. The dispute intensified over attempts to employ non-union labour PHOTO: RICK RYCROFT

Court victory for Australian dockers

Mark Bendeich in Melbourne

THE Australian dockworkers union scored a surprise victory on Tuesday when a court ordered the firm Patrick Stevedores to reinstate 1,400 dockers it sacked two weeks ago. The Federal Court, hearing a union allegation that Patrick had schemed with the government and National Farmers Federation against the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), said Patrick may have engaged in an illegal conspiracy.

"There is an arguable case that the Patrick owners and Patrick employers have engaged in an unlawful conspiracy," Judge Tony North said. "I have concluded that the orders should be made," Judge North told the court.

The interim order — against which Patrick immediately said it would appeal — holds until a full civil trial can be held on the conspiracy accusation. A hearing to discuss the format of the trial will be held next month.

The court decision appeared to be a major blow for Australia's conservative government, which has backed Patrick in its anti-union campaign.

Shares in Lang Corp Ltd, Patrick's parent company, fell sharply on the news and were then suspended by the Australian Stock Exchange. Lang's share price had risen strongly since security guards evicted the MUA members from Patrick terminals.

"This is the first step in pursuing justice for the 2,000 MUA workers sacked on the night of April 7," the MUA national secretary, John Coombs, said in a statement. Patrick also sacked 600 part-time workers. "This is also an important step in protecting the jobs of other Australian workers from ruthless employers," he said.

Mr Coombs said the court decision marked a turning point in the battle to prove that the dismissal of Patrick's entire workforce was illegal. He demanded that Patrick immediately open its gates around the country to the MUA workforce to make Australian ports fully operational again.

Meanwhile Australian farmers said that plans to break union pickets at docks across the nation were well advanced and their trucks would roll in against the pickets this week.

But the prime minister, John Howard, told the farmers that, although he understood their anger and frustration at seeing produce rotting on the docks, they should not break the law. — *Reuters*

Conference seeks to ease Iraqi misery

Ian Black

BRITAIN strove to find new ways this week to help ordinary Iraqis who are "living in misery". But it insisted that sanctions must stay in place until Saddam Hussein complies with United Nations resolutions.

Experts from the UN, the European Union and charities met in London for a conference looking at the practicalities of humanitarian relief in the face of obstruction by Baghdad and angry questions about the effects of sanctions.

"People throughout the world are very concerned about the suffering of the people of Iraq," the International Development Secretary, Clare Short, told delegates. "We are here to explore whether we can help."

Emma Bonino, the EU commissioner for humanitarian affairs, gave eloquent expression to mounting unease at the human cost of containing the Iraqi dictator. "From a strictly humanitarian point of view, implementing the sanctions imposed on Iraq to the bitter end and leaving things at that will not do," she said.

The two-day conference was called by the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, to respond to Arab anger and wider concern about the humanitarian crisis after February's standoff over UN weapons inspections.

But Iraq condemned the event as "evil" while Syria, Jordan and Turkey refused to attend. Iraq says 1.5 million people have died due to shortages of medicine, medical supplies and food since the oil embargo and other sanctions were imposed after its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Britain and the United States have accused President Saddam of delaying purchases of food and medical supplies for the country's 22 million people and sabotaging distribution efforts, while spending lavishly on himself and his inner circle.

"We are in no doubt that Saddam Hussein and not the UN is responsible for the parlous humanitarian conditions inside Iraq," said a senior Foreign Office official.

"Our policy is not some strange ideological stance but the position of the UN. Certain things have to be done for sanctions to end. And they can be done."

The talks are focusing on ways to help the UN implement a new deal to let Iraq sell $5.3 billion worth of oil every six months, up from $2 billion. British sources say President Saddam was enraged when the agreement went through, because it will make it harder for him to control his people.

● United Nations weapons inspectors said that they had made "virtually no progress" in the past six months in verifying that Iraq has destroyed any remaining weapons of mass destruction, a key condition for lifting sanctions.

Tiananmen dissident exiled

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

WANG DAN, a leading figure in the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy demonstrations, arrived in the United States last Sunday after being freed from jail. He is the latest in a string of prominent Chinese dissidents sent into exile abroad.

Mr Wang, aged 29, who was freed on "medical parole", was immediately taken to the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, where doctors said he was in a stable condition.

Shen Tong, a former classmate at Beijing university now living in Massachusetts, said: "He's in very good spirits. He's very upbeat."

Mr Wang's exile comes two months before a visit to Beijing by Bill Clinton, the first such trip by a US president since George Bush in February 1989.

China increasingly prefers to silence its better-known critics by sending them abroad. The tactic gets rid of dissonant voices while avoiding international condemnation.

The White House, which has been lobbying for concessions on human rights before Mr Clinton's trip, welcomed Mr Wang's release.

Human rights groups and democracy activists in Hong Kong cheered the end of his incarceration but condemned the "hostage politics".

"It seems to me that Chinese leaders are making use of our compatriots as chips in the bargaining for more connections with foreign countries," said Martin Lee, leader of Hong Kong's Democratic Party.

"Why should the Chinese people be used like this? Why can't all the dissidents be freed?"

The timing of Mr Wang's release does suggest a diplomatic deal with Washington.

As well as agreeing to Mr Clinton's visit several months earlier than expected, the US has joined most European countries in abandoning attempts to censure China at the United Nations for its human rights record.

Comment, page 12

Mafia turns to 'eco-gangsterism'

John Hooper in Rome

IT HAD long been feared but never proved. Now Italian police say they have hard evidence that the Sicilian Mafia is involved in smuggling weapons-grade uranium. The evidence is a rod of enriched uranium seized near a train station in a suburb of Rome last month in a "sting" set up by an undercover agent. Police arrested 14 people, several of whom are suspected members of Cosa Nostra.

It is the latest evidence that the Mafia, and Italy's other big organised crime groups, are shifting their activities towards what an Italian environmental group, Legambiente, calls "eco-gangsterism". The group says Cosa Nostra, the Neapolitan Camorra, the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta and the Apulian Sacra Corona Unita made about $6.5 billion last year out of the desecration of the environment and the exploitation of animals.

Mafia interest in eco-gangsterism is growing at a vertiginous rate. Legambiente's researchers found that the number of gangs or "clans" involved had almost doubled since January last year.

Prosecutors in Reggio Calabria are investigating claims that the 'Ndrangheta dumped radioactive waste off the "toe" of Italy, a favourite holiday destination. A witness claimed that the gang took the waste out to sea on tramp steamers. The crews were ferried to safety and the steamers scuttled.

A special unit of the paramilitary Carabinieri was set up two years ago to combat nuclear crime. More than a third of the 213 inquiries into the disposal of radioactive waste it carried out last year uncovered violations.

Taps on mobsters' telephones in the Sicilian city of Catania led police to the uranium rod. Catania is only known to have one Mafia "family" of importance. Its "speciality" has long been contraband.

Police said the rod was imported from the Democratic Republic of Congo, but originated in the former Soviet Union. Their agent, posing as a buyer, haggled the price down from $22.5 million to $11.5 million. Police believe another eight rods were brought in.

Uranium smuggling and other forms of eco-gangsterism offer a way out of the financial crisis facing organised crime in Italy. International investigators say that first the Sicilian Cosa Nostra was edged out of the heroin trade in the eighties, and now crime groups have been hit by the clampdown on corruption, known as Tangentopoli.

Prosecutors have stemmed the flow of public contracts that mobsters used to steer towards companies they controlled or extorted. But there is still big money to be had in private building and waste disposal.

The sprawling, unplanned and unauthorised construction around Naples, Palermo and along the Calabrian and Apulian coasts bears witness to the power of the mobsters to suborn and intimidate officials and to infiltrate every aspect of the industry.

The returns from regional administrations show 1.6 million tonnes of dangerous waste was dumped outside its region of origin in 1996. Yet not one regional government reported having authorised the dumping of more waste than it produced. Almost half the country's output could not be accounted for. Environmentalists believe it has been quietly disposed of by organised crime.

Annan's plan aims to end Africa turmoil

Victoria Brittain

THE United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan, last week unveiled a plan for Africa that could bring an end to wars and destabilisation activity in at least seven countries: Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Mr Annan's blueprint for action by UN member states would curb arms sales and covert arms trafficking, end economic sanctions that harm civilians, accept the Organisation of African Unity's plan to cancel all debt for the poorest countries, and toughen administration of refugee camps so that civilians cannot be used as shields by terrorists.

The blunt report says, of Rwanda, Somalia and Liberia, that "by not averting these colossal human tragedies, African leaders have failed the peoples of Africa; the international community has failed them; the United Nations has failed them".

Such public criticism is rare from a UN diplomat. Mr Annan has been one for so long he can gauge better than anyone the impact the report will have on UN members. The initiative was expected to be taken up at ministerial level in New York this week.

With the new international interest in Africa symbolised by President Clinton's recent visit, UN officials hope that both African and Western countries will find it impossible to ignore the challenges laid out in the report.

The UN itself is already clearly accepting the report's call for different practices and an open admission of failures.

Mr Annan's demand for neutrality in refugee camps, and for them to be moved away from borders, is a tacit recognition that the UN refugee agency failed badly in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, when it allowed its camps to be used for the rearming of Hutu extremists.

The recommendation on ending blanket economic sanctions and instead freezing the assets of decision-makers may provide the US and British governments with a way out of their increasingly isolated position on maintaining sanctions against Iraq and Libya.

French seek tax shelter in Britain

EUROPE THIS WEEK
Martin Walker

COLETTE PATONNIER, who runs a small hairdressing salon in Valence in southern France, is an unlikely revolutionary. But her decision to take advantage of Europe's single market rules and register her little company in Britain, thus saving herself some $16,000 a year in taxes and social security payments, is the stuff of social earthquakes.

The French embassy in London swiftly produced figures to suggest that Britain's low-tax environment was not what it seemed, and that to get anything like the services enjoyed by the French, the British had to pay more for private health insurance and private pensions. In Paris the French government warned Ms Patonnier, and the hundreds of small French businesses who have been following her example, that they face legal action. Registration in Britain was not enough for a French hairdresser or a French baker who worked and traded only in France, employing only French people and trading solely in French francs.

Whoops. The days of the French franc are almost over. From next month, when France formally signs up for the single European currency, and from next January when the French government starts keeping its own accounts in euros, the French assertion that the single market has its legal limits will ring even more hollow.

President Jacques Chirac recognised as much in a rare press conference last week. He tried to reassure the French public that their fears of the new currency were "unfounded or excessive", and said that the euro would be the crowbar that would finally prise open the rigid French system of taxes and regulations.

"We have our handicaps, and the French people know it — too much public spending, too much tax, too much bureaucracy. That is why we cannot make a success of Europe without adapting. We need to reform to succeed in Europe," he said. "It's not a question of putting our social benefits at risk, but we have to modernise."

As the French president spoke, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Union launched its economic manifesto for the German elections this autumn. The party promised to slash taxes, cutting the basic rate from 26 to 15 per cent, and the maximum rate from 53 to 39 per cent. It was unveiled by Matthias Wissmann, the CDU's economic spokesman and one of the leaders of a new generation who want to establish a free market identity for their party that is distinct from that of their Social Democrat rivals.

"We need a renaissance of the social market economy, with an alliance of and for hard workers," Mr Wissmann said, making a clear distinction from traditional German corporatism, the old "alliance for work" between unions, business and government.

Ironically, this system owed much to the reformist British military government in the Ruhr in the occupation years after 1945. Now the British model of post-Thatcherism is once again luring Europeans just as the British economy and its exports are starting to stagger under the load of a soaring pound. Sterling is now trading at more than three deutschmarks, 5 per cent higher than the old rate that proved unsustainable when Britain was driven out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1992.

The pound is so high because it is seen as an insurance currency, a reliable haven in which to ride out the possible tumults of the euro's introduction.



A woman begs for money in Athens . . . A new survey shows Greece to be among the EU's poorest countries

It is important to be clear about the British model. It is hard Thatcherism, rather than Tony Blair's emollience, that attracts Europe's conservatives. They envy the way in which she crushed the unions to bring about a strategic shift in the balance of power between labour and capital, although they are too cautious to say so outright. Instead, they talk openly of copying the Thatcherite bonfire of state regulations and controls, and her recasting of the tax system to let the rich keep far more of their money.

However, the detailed figures released last week by Eurostat, the European Union's statistical arm, of the gross domestic product per head across Europe's regions reveal the social costs of Thatcherism.

"Poverty" in Europe's terms is defined as a GDP per head less than 75 per cent of the EU average. In northern Europe (with the exception of the special case of the former East Germany) there are only two "poor" regions. Both are in Britain: Merseyside and South Yorkshire. Moreover Britain's per capita GDP, at $18,250, is significantly lower than the EU average of $19,550.

Europe's grandiose plan for a single currency and single economic policy has been given a sharp jolt of reality by the Eurostat survey. It reveals two Europes, marked by stunningly wide variations in wealth, with parts of Greece, Spain and Italy on less than one-fifth of the annual income per head of the richer regions. Europe's poverty belt includes the whole of Greece, all of Portugal except Lisbon, rural Spain, southern Italy and the former East Germany. Besides Merseyside and South Yorkshire in Britain, there is one pocket of poverty in Austria.

The range stretches from the $48,000-a-head incomes enjoyed in the German port of Hamburg, Europe's richest region, to Crete, Calabria and Extremadura, where people make do on about one-sixth of that amount. The variations are far more extreme than between the richest and poorest American states, despite the EU's claim to have created a single market and a "European social model" of generous social policies and welfare payments.

The European Monetary Union, which will be formally launched next month with 11 nations signing up for the euro, now faces the practical challenge of devising a common monetary policy that can somehow meet the needs of the various economies with their wildly different income levels. Eurosceptics across Europe immediately seized on the figures in support of their arguments against the single currency.

"The plain fact is that you cannot run a common economic and monetary policy for a Europe as diverse as this. It is an economic calculus that simply does not add up," commented Conservative MEP and economic spokesman Graham Mather.

In the Netherlands, facing a general election next month, the single currency has become a prominent issue, with the finance minister, Gerrit Zalm, warning that without a tough new Italian budget his country would vote against Italy joining the euro. In Germany's upper house, the Bundesrat, the rich regions of Bavaria and Saxony abstained from last week's committee votes on EMU out of concern for Italian debt levels.

The sharp statistical picture of two Europes, a rich North and a poor South, endures despite decades of subsidies and financial transfers from Brussels. The EU Structural and Cohesion Funds, running at close to $50 billion a year, are intended to even out these differences, but the Eurostat figures illuminate the limitations of such policies.

The figures also point to national capitals' enduring monopoly of the highest-paid jobs and biggest income earners. Brussels, Paris, Madrid, Lisbon, Stockholm, Vienna and Greater London stand out in their countries as islands of wealth.

So if Colette Patonnier were to open a salon in London, she might do well and avoid any difficulties with the French tax system. But she might do even better in Hamburg.

For richer for poorer
GDP per head, percentage of EU average, 1995

Richest regions	
Hamburg (1)	196
Darmstadt (2)	174
Brussels (3)	172
Luxembourg (4)	168
Ile de France (Paris) (5)	165

Poorest regions	
Ipiros	43
Voreio N Aegean	50
Extremadura	54
Dessau	55
Calabria	60

The poorest regions of Britain are...

Merseyside	71
S. Yorks	72

SPAIN · FRANCE · GERMANY · ITALY · 500 km

It's jobs, jobs, jobs, says ebullient Schröder

Ian Traynor in Leipzig

GERHARD SCHRÖDER took a large step closer to becoming Germany's next chancellor last week by promising the country a new deal and setting out a Blairite agenda of "renewal, justice, and modernisation" after "16 years of failure" by Helmut Kohl.

In the biggest speech of his political career, to more than 500 Social Democrats at a special campaign congress in Leipzig in advance of September's general election, he showered the governing coalition with contempt for presiding over the worst unemployment since 1932. He promised the benchmark of his government would be the battle against 5 million jobless.

"Every measure of our policy will be judged by whether it ensures available jobs or creates new jobs," he said.

He promised income and corporation tax cuts, a doubling of education spending over five years, welfare and pensions reform, but also vowed to reverse some welfare and pension shifts by the Kohl government last year.

Against a backdrop saying "We're Ready. The Power of the New", Mr Schröder and the party leader, Oskar Lafontaine, entered the arena at a snail's pace, milking the applause, hugging and shaking hands with well-wishers.

But while Mr Schröder repeatedly denounced the record of the Kohl government, he made it plain that he wanted, in many respects, to continue where the current chancellor leaves off. His strategy, highly successful so far, has been to stake out the middle ground of politics.

"Realism and action are more important to us than ideology," he said. "We won't do everything differently, but we'll do it better."

The Schröder team is expected to maintain the momentum by issuing a set of priorities to be undertaken within the first 100 days of an SPD-led government. It will include jobs for 100,000 unemployed youngsters and grants of at least $160 a month for all students. The SPD also promised no tuition fees.

On wider-ranging economic policies, Mr Schröder remained hard to pin down. The party manifesto adopted said that public finances would need to be examined before specific commitments were made. "Not everything that is desirable can be funded," it stated.

Mr Schröder, aged 54, who is on the right of the SPD and has many enemies in its ranks, was officially nominated the party's election candidate by the one-day congress, by 479 votes to 24. If he wins the general election — the polls put the SPD about 10 points ahead of Mr Kohl's Christian Democrat Union — he will be the first Social Democratic chancellor in the history of the republic to succeed from opposition.

The last Social Democratic chancellor, Helmut Schmidt — deposed by Mr Kohl in 1982 — turned up to support him. "We have made a good choice," Mr Schmidt, aged 79, said. "The probability is very high that we will take over in the autumn."

In a speech lasting almost two hours, Mr Schröder stressed the priorities: jobs, economic renewal, welcoming globalisation as an opportunity not a threat, and rejuvenating the "German model" through partnership and a new consensus.

On Europe and the single currency, he accepted the euro as a *fait accompli* but talked robustly of defending the national interest.

Mr Schröder, who has had a long and difficult relationship with the SPD, bluntly made it clear that if he wins he will not be bound by the party line. "If you afford me your confidence, you are also giving me the freedom that this office needs," he told the congress delegates.

There are many who speculate that the right-left Schröder-Lafontaine double act will degenerate after a victorious election into rivalry.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
April 26 1998

A monster created by the West

Continued from page 1

region: Vietnam. Cambodia was now the US's "last battle of the Vietnam war", as an American official put it.

Two US relief aid workers, Linda Mason and Roger Brown, later wrote: "The US government insisted that the Khmer Rouge be fed ... the US preferred that the Khmer Rouge operation benefit from the credibility of an internationally known relief operation."

In 1980, under US pressure, the World Food Programme handed over food worth $12 million to pass on to the Khmer Rouge. There is little doubt that without this support, and the flow of arms from China through Thailand, the Khmer Rouge would have withered on the vine.

The British government played its part, too. "We have never given," said foreign secretary Douglas Hurd, "and will never give support of any kind to the Khmer Rouge." This was false. From 1979-82 the British government voted in the United Nations for Pol Pot to occupy the UN seat. Moreover Britain voted with the Khmer Rouge in the agencies of the UN. Not once did it challenge the credentials of Pol Pot's man.

Clearly such a charade could not be sustained, and in 1982 the US and China, supported by Britain, invented the Coalition of the Democratic Government of Kampuchea, which was neither a coalition, nor democratic, nor a government, nor in Kampuchea. It was what the CIA likes to call "a master illusion". The exiled Prince Norodom Sihanouk was appointed its head. And nothing changed. Two "non-communist" factions were dominated by the Khmer Rouge, whose representative, Thaoun Prasith, a personal friend of Pol Pot, continued to speak for Cambodia.

If the US bombing was the first phase of Cambodia's holocaust, and Pol Pot's Year Zero the second, the third phase was the use of the UN by the US, its allies and China as the instrument of Cambodia's — and Vietnam's — punishment.

With Vietnamese troops preventing the return of the Khmer Rouge and a Hanoi-installed regime in Phnom Penh, a UN embargo barred Cambodia from all international agreements on trade and communications — even from the World Health Organisation. The UN withheld development aid from only one Third World country, Cambodia, which lay unreconstructed from the years of bombing and neglect. For the US the blockade was total. Not even Cuba and the Soviet Union were treated in this way.

Pol Pot meanwhile resided comfortably in his headquarters near the Thai town of Trat, where he conferred with his politburo of mass murderers, all of whom had escaped. He took a new wife and held seminars for senior cadre and battlefield commanders in complete security, all the while monitored by US and British intelligence.

The British support for Pol Pot, however indirect, was one of the best-kept secrets of the Thatcher years, although Margaret Thatcher herself had given a clue when she said that "the more reasonable ones in the Khmer Rouge will have to play some part in a future government". In fact, during the eighties, at the behest of the US, Britain's SAS was training the Khmer Rouge-dominated coalition, notably in mine-laying, an SAS speciality.

Finally the British government could deny it no longer. In 1991 the Government admitted the secret training in a written statement to Parliament.

If on his deathbed Pol Pot felt moved to offer thanks to his Western collaborators, he surely would have made special mention of an unworkable UN peace plan imposed by the West and China in 1992 and invented in Washington. For at the insistence of the US and China the Khmer Rouge was included in the UN operation as a legitimate "warring faction". The rationale was that it was far too powerful to be left out.

Since then the argument has been turned upside down. Thanks to the "triumph" of the UN, the Khmer Rouge has "virtually disappeared". In 1993 the UN's own military maps showed that in half of Cambodia Pol Pot now had a military advantage he did not have before the UN arrived two years earlier.

"You must understand," the UN spokesman in Phnom Penh, Eric Falt, said in 1992, "the peace process was aimed at allowing the Khmer Rouge to gain respectability."

Khieu Samphan, Pol Pot's personal henchman — who once said that the only mistake the Khmer Rouge had made was not to kill enough people — took the salute of British, US, Australian and other UN troops as a guest of honour on United Nations Day in Phnom Penh. Standing next to him was the Australian UN commander, Lt General John Sanderson.

I asked the general how it felt to be in such company. He replied that he was "neutral". I reminded him that the Khmer Rouge was guilty of genocide. "They are your words," he said. I quoted to him the report of the UN Special Rapporteur who described the Khmer Rouge as guilty of genocide "even under the most restricted definition".

I said: "General, he was speaking for the body you represent and he described them as genocidists."

"He may well have," he replied, "but I'm not going to."

The truth is that Sanderson was only echoing the view of the then Australian foreign minister, Gareth Evans, who claimed credit for thinking up the UN peace plan. In 1989 Evans had floated the proposal that the word "genocide" be dropped from Australian government briefing documents. Indeed he demanded "even-handed" treatment for the Khmer Rouge and insisted it be allowed to join the government in Phnom Penh.

Is the Khmer Rouge now finished? I doubt it. The more pertinent question is: will those foreign governments that backed Pol Pot while wringing their hands now help to rebuild the country they helped to devastate?

"Why should we flagellate ourselves," said Kissinger last week, "for what Cambodians did to each other?"

John Pilger's new book Hidden Agendas is published by Vintage Books at £8.99

Whitehall attempts to foil Net hackers

David Hencke

A TEAM of intelligence agents has been paid to break into the confidential files of cabinet ministers as part of a secret two-month security test to ensure that the launch of Whitehall's first internal computer network this week is safe from hackers.

A team drawn from the security services, the Government's spy listening post, GCHQ, and an élite code-breaking group at the Ministry of Defence have targeted senior members of the Government to ensure ministers can send electronic documents to each other without hackers breaching security.

Among the targets were Tony Blair, the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, David Clark, who is in charge of information technology.

Among documents that hackers are said to have tried to obtain were detailed communications over the defence review, minutes of Cabinet meetings and committees.

The exercise was ordered by Dr Clark after a series of security breaches around the world. A hacker in north London, Richard Pryce, used the codename Datastream Cowboy to break into US military bases, checking for UFO sightings. Another teenage hacker based in Israel, nicknamed the Analyser, broke into the Pentagon.

The Whitehall system — known as Intranet — will carry hundreds of documents every day from ministers. It aims to provide links between all departments except the Northern Ireland Office in Belfast. The Foreign Office will be linked inside Britain but there will be no access from embassies abroad. Agencies such as the Inland Revenue, Customs and Excise, and Benefits will be connected to the system.

Few of the Cabinet are well versed in using computers, so only their officials will be likely to make the best use of the system, which will rely on renting a secure section of the Internet from Cable & Wireless and Trusted Intelligence Systems using Microsoft software.

Meanwhile Mr Blair is to go live on the Internet, becoming the first prime minister to conduct an on-line question-and-answer session.

Downing Street is reopening the No 10 website, including a revival of John Major's "virtual reality" tour of No 10. The Internet Q & A session is the brainchild of Mr Blair's spin doctor team — to show him as "modern and up to date" and "taking a world lead for Britain".

In fact Mr Blair hardly knows the difference between a modem and a microchip, and prefers sending hand-written notes to officials.

The plan is to have the Internet interview session on April 29 live on TV, with questions earlier sent in by e-mail to Mr Blair.

Ann Clark, who at the age of 71 has become a Scrabble addict on the Internet in her local library, put the first question to the Downing Street website.

It was an earnest question from a retired teacher. Would Tony Blair ensure teacher training was properly funded? But she got no instant electronic reply from No 10 — because the demands of publicity meant Mr Blair was standing beside her at the terminal in Croydon library, south London.

The Prime Minister said: "I have a constant sense of humiliation whenever I see my children at a computer screen." Ms Clark, in contrast, insisted: "It has changed my life."

Croydon's £30 million library was chosen for the launch because it is already the electronic temple which the Government hopes all bigger libraries will become. It has 60 free public Internet terminals which can read 150 CD-Rom information databases, and a multi-media section for children.

Libraries are to receive £68 million of lottery money to form an electronic "national grid for learning" by 2000.

Last post sounded at Arras

I N A reaffirmed family spirit of sorrow and pride, two British first world war soldiers whose remains were discovered 81 years late, last week received Christian burial close to where they fell, *writes John Ezard*.

Frank King, aged 23, and George Anderson, 30, were given named graves in the quiet fields of northern France for the first time since they died in the battle of Arras on April 11, 1917.

At their gravesides as the Last Post sounded stood 16 of their descendants, who were traced despite the gulf of time and memory. Frank King's niece, Margaret Middleton, aged 62, of Chesterton, Cambridge, said: "It was very moving. I can't imagine what it was like to have fought here on this land. I feel very sad but very proud."

Private King was one of three brothers lost in the war.

Also there to honour them was an Arras veteran, Harry Wells, aged 98; the Duke of Kent, as colonel in chief of their regiment, the Royal Fusiliers; and the armed forces minister, John Reid.

Interred with them after a full military funeral was a third soldier, identified only as a Royal Fusilier. The three were among 27 victims found in a mass grave by archaeologists looking for Celtic remains on a site to be used for a motorway.

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN STILLWELL

Group 4 clings to its asylum role

Alan Travis

GROUP 4 security is to run the riot-hit Campsfield House detention centre for asylum seekers for another three years, despite a critical official inspection report published last week.

The Home Office minister, Mike O'Brien congratulated Group 4 for doing a "good job in difficult circumstances" at the largest centre — Campsfield House in Oxfordshire — where there have been two riots in the past four years.

Mr O'Brien went on to confirm that the Government intends to build more private detention centres to increase the number of asylum seekers and illegal entrants held in Britain. The centres are also to lose their status as "secure hostels". A new regime of sanctions and incentives will be introduced to control disruptive detainees. They are to be treated more like unconvicted prisoners.

Mr O'Brien's response came as the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbotham, published the official inquiry report, which warns that the 900-place detention system is overloaded and says only a fraction of those who should be detained were being held.

Mr O'Brien, who attacked "high profile" pressure groups who had made "wild" allegations against Group 4, asserted that as many detention places would be built as were needed to ensure that the policy was no longer applied arbitrarily.

The chief inspector's report endorses an expansion in the number of detention centres but specifically said it should be done to reduce greatly the proportion of the 400 detainees being held in prisons.

The Government's response [illegible] appointed human rights groups, refugee organisations and local campaigners who have been calling for Campsfield's closure.

Amnesty International voiced concern that the minister had failed to act on the recommendation that judges and not immigration officers should decide who is held. "Despite the Government's repeated claim that detention is used only as a last resort, many of these desperate people are locked up before their case is heard," said Amnesty's refugee officer, Jan Shaw.

But Mr O'Brien rejected claims by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees that Britain's detention policy breached the European Convention on Human Rights. "We are absolutely sure we comply."

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Gobbledegook under attack

John Ezard

THE giant-killing Plain English lobby, which has stripped much of the jargon from Whitehall and British commerce, is being recruited to tackle the ogre's castle of gobbledegook — the European Union.

Despite past attacks on Europe as "the ultimate linguistic nightmare", one of the lobby's leaders has been invited to help the union stop calling cows "grain-consuming animal units".

The bureaucracy which speaks of "in-out cohabitation" when it means links between states inside and outside a single currency has asked Martin Cutts to come to Brussels to simplify the task of its translation service.

Mr Cutts co-founded the Plain English Campaign, with its annual gobbledegook awards, nearly 20 years ago. So savagely did its Liverpudlian directness sting government departments and groups such as legal and insurance firms that many of them hired their critics to rewrite standard forms that had baffled the public since Victorian times.

Mr Cutts now runs the Plain English Commission. He said plain speaking should be the goal of all those producing "turgid and unreadable" Euro documents.

He is joining the EU as part of Britain's six-month presidency. His mission is not only to help cut translation costs but to improve public understanding. He is expected to run courses to help officials think and write more clearly.

He said: "They should cast off such widely taught ideas as never starting a sentence with 'but', 'because' or 'so' and avoiding split infinitives. These ideas are part of the mythology of good English that great writers have ignored for at least 400 years."

Mr Cutts's task includes putting a stop to references to streamlined bus and train timetables as "interoperable, inter-modal transport systems".

Beckett halts case against Gulf arms firm

David Pallister

MARGARET Beckett, the Trade and Industry Secretary, last week intervened personally to stop disqualification proceedings against the directors of the defence company Astra Holdings, which was embroiled in the controversies over the secret arming of Iran and Iraq.

Her decision ends one of the longest-running political dramas of the 1990s, involving three Commons committee hearings, a customs investigation and a DTI inquiry.

Gerald James, former chairman of Astra, and three other directors were due to face a civil action next month to disqualify them as company directors for the collapse of Astra in 1991. But at a preliminary hearing in February, Mr Justice Rattee invited Mrs Beckett to reconsider the 35 charges. The judge expressed his dismay at the cost of the impending case after it became clear the DTI inspectors who examined the collapse in 1993 had recommended no action be taken against all but one director.

Astra came to public notice when it took over a Belgian arms company, PRB, and found that some of the contracts were for Saddam Hussein's supergun. A subsidiary, BMARC, was later revealed to have secretly shipped naval cannon to Iran via Singapore.

After his removal from the board in 1991, Mr James has provided copious memoranda to the public hearings into the arms trade, alleging that Astra, with the connivance of British intelligence, secretly supplied both sides in the Iran-Iraq war.

Trimble faces hard fight after victory

Ewen MacAskill in Belfast and John Mullin in Dublin

ULSTER Unionist leader David Trimble faces the loss of at least one of his MPs as he fights this week to heal the deep rift in his parliamentary party over the Northern Ireland political settlement.

The embarrassment of his disciplinary problems with his troublesome MPs contrasts with the resounding victory he achieved last weekend when the party's ruling council voted by 72 per cent in favour of the deal.

It marked a historic turning point for the party, which is remodelling itself and is discarding much of its old "No surrender" baggage. The vote boosted the chances of a "yes" vote in the May 22 referendum.

Sinn Fein, at its annual conference in Dublin, delayed a decision on the settlement until a special conference next month, a sign of the difficulties the party faces with its own dissidents.

The Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, signalled that the party intended to acquiesce in the deal and put up candidates for the new Northern Ireland Assembly, a move that will require a change to the party constitution and will enrage traditional republicans.

Last week the Irish government freed nine IRA prisoners to help Sinn Fein sell the peace settlement to sceptical hardliners. The move infuriated unionists, who were already concerned that the accord conceded too much to republicans.

One of the Ulster Unionist rebels, Willie Thompson, MP for West Tyrone, insisted he will defy Mr Trimble and campaign with the Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the rival Democratic Unionist party, against the settlement.

In an extraordinary move, he gave an ultimatum to his constituency association to either back or sack him. Early indications were that Mr Thompson has taken an unnecessary gamble, with the constituency association chairman saying it was impossible to predict.

"If I lose the support of the constituency association, I would cease to be an Ulster Unionist MP, but it does not mean I would cease to be a Member of Parliament," said Mr Thompson.

Others among the 10 Ulster Unionist MPs are also threatening to defy the leadership line. A senior party source said: "We are prepared to kiss goodbye to Thompson, but we want to keep the others aboard."

Mr Trimble will look to Tony Blair for further help in persuading his MPs to accept the deal. Mr Blair will shortly announce details of the independent inquiry into reform of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

The inquiry is likely to be similar to a royal commission, the kind of framework Mr Trimble had been pushing for and an important concession for him to present to his MPs.

Mr Trimble this week will meet senior party officials to discuss strategy for the referendum and the subsequent Northern Ireland Assembly elections.

A poll in Ireland's Sunday Independent had support for the agreement running at 80 per cent.

Sinn Fein's leadership requires a two-thirds majority at the special conference to change the party's constitution to enable it to take seats in the Assembly. There was some nervousness, but the betting is that it will succeed.

Mr Adams said: "A defensive strategy will not achieve our ends. It will emasculate the struggle. We need to take the initiative and to take the struggle to our opponents in every way. This will mean taking risks."

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Hard choices, page 32

Police chief refuses to go after flawed inquiry

Lawrence Donegan

THE chief constable of Grampian police remained defiantly in his post on Tuesday despite an unprecedented demand from Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, that he resign after his force was accused of maladministration, neglect and incompetence.

Ian Oliver, aged 58, once tipped as a future head of the Metropolitan police, accused Mr Dewar of political interference after the minister said he should "pack his bags and go".

Grampian police was heavily criticised in a report into its investigation of the murder of Scott Simpson by convicted paedophile Steven Leisk last July.

The inquiry, headed by Lothian's deputy chief constable, Graham Power, concluded there was "serious corporate failure" in Grampian's conduct of the investigation. It accused officers of "lacking professional rigour" in following up vital evidence and concluded there was a failure of leadership in the force.

The findings were welcomed by Dennis Simpson, the dead boy's father.

Mr Dewar expressed sympathy for the Simpson family. He described the findings as deeply disturbing and said they presented a picture of a police force lacking in leadership. "The buck stops at the top and I believe that Dr Oliver should pack his bags and go now."

Ian Oliver reacts to the results of the inquiry into the Simpson case

Leisk, who had four previous convictions for sexual offences against children, was jailed for life after pleading guilty to the killing. Police were unaware that Leisk lived next to a playing field in Aberdeen where Scott was last seen alive, and officers failed to find the victim's body, despite searching the area where it was only partially hidden.

Mr Power concluded that the Grampian force's assessment of its own conduct, requested by Scottish Office ministers after the trial, lacked objectivity and "invites speculation that it is intended to draw the mind away from the truth".

On the day an independent report was due to be published on the case, Dr Oliver chose to remain in Taiwan at a police conference.

Dr Oliver, one of the country's most outspoken police chief constables, was expected to receive a vote of no confidence when Grampian police authority meets for an emergency session this week. But Mr Oliver said he saw no reason to tender his resignation.

He said he accepted all but two of the 36 recommendations and conclusions made in the report — the corporate failure of his force and the implication that his officers had attempted to cover up their failures.

A member of a devout evangelical order in Grampian, he announced earlier this year that he intended to leave his post in late May after being photographed kissing a female member of the congregation.

The Secretary of State has powers to dismiss a chief constable, but political sources concede that it was unlikely Dr Oliver would leave his post unless he chose to do so.

In Brief

ARCHBISHOP Trevor Huddleston, who devoted much of his life to the struggle against apartheid, has died at the age of 84. Obituary next week

THE inquiry into the world's worst outbreak of *E.coli*, which opened this week, could last three months.

LEGAL advice has led the Government to abandon a proposal to impose a moratorium on planting genetically modified crops in Britain.

A VIDEO of two British hostages kidnapped in the rebel Russian territory of Chechenia shows them well and asking for help.

THE GOVERNMENT is set to celebrate the millennium with a four-day public holiday.

THE breeding programme of one of Britain's rarest birds, the black-tailed godwit, has been wiped out by the Easter floods, which have devastated the largest colony in the UK at nature reserves in East Anglia.

THE Full Monty was the biggest winner at the Bafta awards, the British equivalent of the Oscars, taking four awards. Dame Judi Dench won the best actress award for her performance as Queen Victoria in Mrs Brown. Titanic won no prizes.

LARRY HARRISON, the driver of the train which crashed at Southall, west London last year, killing seven people, has been charged with manslaughter.

CONVICTED child killer Sidney Cooke is being held under 24-hour supervision in a West country police station.

LORD HOWELL, former Labour sports minister and the man who famously made it rain during the drought of 1976, has died at the age of 74.

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Ethics clash over political funding

David Hencke

A ROW over whether the state should pay for political activity dominated the opening day of Lord Neill's inquiry into party funding last week.

The chairman of the Committee on Standards in Public Life was presented with contradictory evidence from a constitutional expert, Vernon Bogdanor, and the free market Adam Smith Institute on the role of the state.

Lord Neill's committee launched its inquiry last month — in the wake of the furore in November over Labour's links with Formula One motor racing chief Bernie Ecclestone — following a request from the Prime Minister.

Mr Ecclestone was at the centre of controversy over his £1 million donation to Labour before the election and the subsequent row over tobacco sponsorship in grand prix racing. The money was later returned to him.

The party also pledged an independent review of party funding and a ban on foreign donations to political organisations.

Mr Bogdanor, professor of government at Oxford university, called for public funding of political parties to "achieve greater probity in our public life". He proposed that public funding of the parties should be linked to an index of party activity, such as membership.

He told the committee that parties should rely less on company and trade union donations, and cash from wealthy individuals. He said the public would always distrust the motives of people — even if they were innocent — who gave: £1 million or more to parties: "They would be seen as trying to buy influence." He also called for national limits on spending to deter corruption during an election campaign and for large donations to be declared.

Stuart Barrow, from the Adam Smith Institute, warned the committee against using more taxpayers' money to fund politicians. He said all donations over £1,000 should be declared on the Internet, and parties' accounts checked annually by auditors. But he was against limits on donations, a ban on foreign donations, or limits on cash for campaigning.

He also called for the present constituency limits on spending to be lifted. Any malpractice, he claimed, could be weeded out by auditors and investigative journalists.

The committee will hold hearings two days a week in London until mid-May and then visit Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff. It will report by September, in time for the Government to legislate in the next session of Parliament.

Tax exiles, expatriates who have taken out foreign citizenship and European Union citizens who have not registered to vote in British elections could all find themselves prohibited from donating cash.

The strongest opposition to the foreign funding ban has come from the Scottish National party whose most prominent donor is film actor Sean Connery, who lives in Marbella, Spain.



Skirting the issue . . . a 'confident, post-feminist feeling' has replaced bossiness PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS THOMOND

Girls take on the boys in the playground

SURREPTITIOUS note-taking in a sample of British playgrounds has revealed a new breed of primary schoolgirl, and a robust ability of traditional games to absorb the contributions of "teleculture", *writes Martin Wainwright*.

A self-confident and aggressive air has begun to mark the clapping and dancing games of 1990s girls, according to research, with boys retreating from their traditional, usually football-based domination.

Tapes of play routines suggest that a "confident, post-feminist feeling" has replaced defensive bossiness.

"There is an admirable 'We can do it', centre-stage feeling about the girls' play which simply wasn't there 10 years ago," education lecturer Elizabeth Grugeon told an international conference on Children's Oral Culture at Sheffield university.

"Words and tunes for traditional games are altered to take in references to TV programmes," she said, citing a playground version of the Neighbours theme tune which began: "Neighbours . . . Pick your nose and taste the flavours," as well as a brutal adaptation of the Teletubbies' opening song, which ended with Dipsy being stabbed through the heart and shot in the head.

Recruitment crisis hits health service

David Brindle

A MOUNTING crisis in recruiting and retaining nurses is threatening to put the NHS in jeopardy, the Royal College of Nursing warned last week.

The combination of an ageing workforce and failure to attract young people into nursing spelled disaster for the running of hospitals and community health services, according to Christine Hancock, RCN general secretary. "If we can't keep our nurses and attract new people . . . there won't even be an NHS in 10 years," she said.

Nurses are anxious about recruitment and being shut out of plans to reshape the NHS market, and angry at the decision to pay their 3.8 per cent pay award in stages.

According to a survey by the Department of Health, four in five NHS trusts are having problems recruiting nurses. By 2000 one in four nurses will be eligible for early retirement. At the other end of the profession, up to one in three nursing students is dropping out.

Whereas 96 per cent of nurses joining the register in 1990 were still in the profession two years later, that figure fell to 86 per cent of those registering in 1995.

Ms Hancock said nursing had to be made more attractive in terms of pay, training and job satisfaction, which meant nurses taking more control of health care.

At the same time leading doctors are warning that the public will suffer if nearly 1,000 jobs in general practice remain unfilled.

"We are facing a crisis of recruitment and retention," said John Chisholm, chairman of the General Medical Services Committee of the British Medical Association, which represents the country's 32,000 GPs. "It is worse than we have seen at any time since the early 1960s."

Hundreds of GPs are retiring early while the newly qualified choose to work in areas of medicine that were once considered less prestigious than that of the family doctor.

Dr Chisholm said there was a "time-bomb" waiting to go off in the inner cities, where the problems are most acute. Many of those who work in inner-city practices are foreign and are reaching retirement age. Few overseas doctors are there to replace them because immigration laws were changed in 1985 to allow only European Union doctors to work in Britain.

Meanwhile pay rises for chief executives of NHS trusts have been running at more than twice the level of those for nurses, according to research by Incomes Data Services, which puts the average chief executive's annual earnings at £72,000.

Their basic salaries — set by each trust — went up by an average 5.2 per cent in 1996/7. In the same year nurses were awarded a rise of 2 per cent that was supposed to be topped up by local health trusts.

Teachers demand hours cut

John Carvel

BRITAIN'S biggest teaching union delivered a slap in the face to David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, when it called for extensive industrial action to achieve the equivalent of four days of classroom teaching a week.

The National Union of Teachers' conference in Blackpool defied the advice of its leadership and voted by a narrow majority for a week of protest action in the autumn.

This could include refusal to teach classes with more than 30 pupils, no cover for absent colleagues and no more than one after-school staff meeting. Teachers may also limit their week to 35 hours.

The decision cannot be implemented without the support of at least 90,000 of the union's 190,000 members in a ballot. Moderate members of the executive said such support would not be forthcoming.

The conference vote was a rebuff to Mr Blunkett's impassioned appeal for teachers to abandon their victim mentality and become partners in his campaign for higher standards. But Doug McAvoy, the NUT's general secretary, called for "constructive engagement" with a popular government to achieve change by force of argument and solid research.

Most delegates supported a campaign to promote a national teachers' contract, including an 11-point manifesto for improving conditions of employment. It would give teachers the right to spend 20 per cent of the working week out of the classroom on marking, preparation of lessons and administration. This would be equivalent to a day a week.

Moderate members of the executive supported the demands, but quarrelled with the tactics. "An action not supported by the members will give the wrong message to the Government and local education authorities about our determination as a union to achieve a new contract for teachers," said Jerry Glazier, an Essex teacher who heads the salaries committee.

But Will Reese, on the executive of the leftwing Socialist Teachers Alliance, said the week of action would put pressure on the Government by drawing attention to teachers' excessive workload. "That is not threatening the life chances of children. It is defending the education service."



Indonesians seek British scholarships

John Aglionby in Jakarta

TENS of thousands of Indonesians desperate for foreign qualifications as their country sinks into an economic abyss are flocking to a road show by 37 British universities, offering 450 scholarships.

Crowds have jammed halls in the capital, Jakarta, and the second-largest city, Surabaya, to learn how to save £25,000 on British higher education.

"No country has ever offered such a large number of scholarships," said Andriwati, aged 23, an engineering student hoping to study for an MBA abroad. "With the economy collapsing, people believe it is even more important to get a foreign degree. And if we can do it cheaply so much the better."

Indonesia's economy has been almost paralysed by nine months of turmoil. The currency, the rupiah, has fallen more than 70 per cent, making it too expensive for all but a tiny minority to study abroad. Analysts say a sustainable recovery is many years away.

The British government is providing £620,000, including a £240,000 grant from the Department of Trade and Industry, and the institutions are matching this. Liverpool university, for example, is allowing students to pay in rupiah at an exchange rate of 5,474 to the pound. The rupiah closed on the day of the roadshow in Jakarta at 12,350 to the pound.

Other universities, such as Nottingham, are waiving tuition fees for some applicants for Masters degrees.

Dr Neil Kemp, the Indonesia director of the British Council and organiser of the event, said: "Britain makes billions from foreign students and does not want to lose this."

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Academic debunks Diana's saintliness

Luke Harding

A RIGHTWING philosophy professor took a sledgehammer to the saintly reputation of Diana, Princess of Wales, in a book published last week.

Professor Anthony O'Hear of Bradford university denounces Diana as a symbol of "fake Britain" and says she was a muddled, self-obsessed woman who damaged herself and the monarchy.

Faking It — The Sentimentalisation Of Modern Society is published by the right-leaning think-tank, the Social Affairs Unit. The book — which includes essays by academics on politics, art, religion and even eating habits — depicts Britain as a land of sentimentality and self-indulgence.

"Today's Britain is not 'modern', let alone 'cool'. It is a fake society with fake institutions," say the book's editors. "The society's defining moment was Princess Diana's funeral, in which sentimentality — mob grief — was personified and canonised, the elevation of feelings above reason, reality and restraint."

In his debunking chapter on Diana, "Queen of Hearts", Professor O'Hear castigates her "obsession with her own feelings". He accuses her of a "child-like self-centredness" and a failure to understand her public role. He coins a new term — emotionally correct — to describe Diana's self-regarding choice of good causes to support.

Several charities and Conservative grandees condemned the book. "It seems to me a farrago of nonsense. The Princess of Wales is one of the great figures of our time," said the former Tory minister, Lord St John of Fawsley. Professor O'Hear was a "dessicated calculating machine" and his opinions "uninformed".

But Peter Mullen, the book's co-editor and an Anglican clergyman in the diocese of York, described Diana as "extremely self-indulgent and infantile. She believed the expression of one's feelings to be the be-all and end-all." He compared modern Britain to the "Roman Empire in its last days . . . when it lived on the sentimental recollection of past glories".

Professor O'Hear described reaction to Diana's death as "possibly the most remarkable, most surprising event of my lifetime". He wanted to understand why so many people got caught up in the emotion.

The philosopher has previously attacked environmentalists, "indoctrinating" teachers, and playwrights who use "decadent" material.

Meanwhile Earl Spencer said he felt "battered" by claims that he was profiteering from the death of his sister. He also disclosed that he has borrowed several million pounds to fund the transformation of Althorp, his ancestral estate in Northamptonshire, into a shrine to Diana.

The earl has faced widespread criticism over his decision to charge £9.50 for admission to the Diana memorial museum. But in an attempt to head off public unease, he pledged to publish the museum's accounts. There is still confusion as to what percentage of the admission fee will be given to charity.

● Buckingham Palace is asking Britain's biggest companies to supply a public relations supremo to help overhaul the palace's out-of-touch image. A City headhunter has written to the chairmen of 100 companies to ask if they will provide a senior communications expert on secondment to the palace for at least three years.

Death ends rock-solid partnership

OBITUARY
Linda McCartney

THE photographer, cook and sometime musician Linda McCartney, who has died of cancer aged 56, endured, and eventually overcame her critics.

She withstood the hostility of deluded sections of the British public who saw in her 1969 marriage to the supposedly cute Beatle Paul his ensnarement by a New York carpetbagger. She played on amid the derision of reviewers when she moved from photographing rock stars to trying to be one with her husband's post-Beatles band Wings in the 1970s. And if her conversion to vegetarianism — shared by her husband and children — was once seen as a fashionable fad, it became an article of faith. Out of meatless cottage pie came forth a multi-million-pound cottage industry, in Britain and the United States.

Linda McCartney was born the second of four children, of show business lawyer Lee Eastman. She grew up in Scarsdale, in a background that exposed her to the New York art world of the 1950s.

She was a 19-year-old at an undistinguished Vermont college when her mother died in a plane crash. In the aftershock she married a geologist and had a child, Heather. The marriage crumbled when her husband went to Africa. She moved to Arizona, studied art history and, inspired by the classic Dorothea Lang photographs of migrant workers, started taking pictures, photographing the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and the Beatles.

She met McCartney in a London club and was impressed by the Magritte painting that hung in his house. They married in 1969, and she became a devoted mother of their three children.

She said she was converted to vegetarianism while on their farm in Scotland. The family had watched lambs gambolling outside. Inside they contemplated their lunchtime leg of lamb. Something clicked. "God," she thought, "we're eating one of their legs." Her subsequent cookery books sold like hot cakes.

Nigel Fountain

Linda McCartney, photographer and cook, born September 24, 1941; died April 17, 1998

A new sort of unionism

THE ULSTER Unionists have had a bad press down the years, often with good reason. Throughout the world their image is poor, a mixture of intransigence and bigotry, the party of No Surrender. Few outside Northern Ireland distinguish between the varying strands of unionism, which has come to be epitomised down the years by the fundamentalist approach of Ian Paisley. International sympathy has rested mainly with the nationalist Catholic community, the victims of sectarianism and discrimination over decades.

A change took place last weekend, more significant than has yet been realised — the biggest since the Ulster Unionist party was founded early this century. The vote of its ruling council was more than just a vote of confidence in their leader David Trimble, who had negotiated the political settlement at Stormont: it was a break with the party's inglorious past. Throughout their history, the Ulster Unionists have defined themselves in a solely negative way: total opposition to involvement with the Irish Republic. Last weekend's vote was for a settlement that will see Unionists actively engage with ministers from Dublin.

The transformation will not be easy. The unionist community is divided. Mr Paisley's rival but smaller Democratic Unionist party will campaign ferociously against, and Mr Trimble's own party is split, with half his MPs opposed to the settlement. He himself can be volatile, and when necessary can put on the Orange cloak of hardline unionism. He was rightly pilloried for his behaviour in the Orange stand-off at Drumcree three years ago. But he deserves thanks not only for the way he handled the negotiations but for decisively carrying his party with him. If the vote had been No, the peace process would effectively have been over.

Sinn Fein's annual conference in Dublin ended last Sunday without the same decisiveness being displayed. While it would help if it were to back the settlement, this is not so crucial: Sinn Fein agreeing to adopt a neutral or low-profile approach to the referendum rather than campaigning against should be enough to ensure its success. More important by far is for Sinn Fein, as is expected, to change its constitution to allow candidates to take seats in the new Assembly, drawing them further into the democratic process.

If peace is to be achieved in Northern Ireland it will need not only new political mechanisms but a complete overhaul in attitudes. The case is often made for Protestants to acknowledge and respect the traditions of the nationalist community. Less often heard is the case for the nationalist community giving equal respect to the Protestant tradition. Both sides will have to learn to be less selective in their history, and instead accept — and perhaps in time take pride in — both traditions.

China sends a small signal

WANG DAN is the second Chinese dissident to be sent into exile "on medical parole" within the past few months, and for the same cynical reason. The release of Wei Jingsheng last November came soon after President Jiang Zemin's successful visit to the United States. Mr Wang's departure comes two months ahead of Bill Clinton's visit to China — which needs to be a success too. In both cases the Chinese authorities granted medical parole despite having denied for years that there was any problem with the prisoner's health. They also insisted not just that he should go abroad but that he should head for the US. The linkage with diplomatic interest seems transparent.

Yet beyond the immediate advantage to those involved — even the bravest endurance has its limits — may there not be some more general benefit? Both the US and the European Union (led by Britain) argue that such cases reflect a relaxation in Beijing's attitude towards human rights, and that this justifies their own softer approach towards China. The list of political dissidents presented to Beijing is a short one. By that standard a reduction of one or two appears significant — though it looks pathetic compared with Amnesty International's list of many hundreds. The release of Mr Wei and of Mr Wang may have upset some hardliners in Beijing, and could strengthen the hand of liberals who would like to go further. There is nothing wrong with an incremental approach — but only if there is reasonable hope that it will produce results.

Some evidence is emerging now of a more tolerant attitude towards political debate under the post-Deng Xiaoping leadership. Though recent national congresses of the Communist Party and the government failed to broach at all seriously the subject of political reform, intellectuals close to the establishment are beginning to discuss it. The argument is more cautious than in the late 1980s, focusing on the reform of political "structures" rather than on implementing the basic rights enshrined — and ignored — in the constitution. But to suggest that "human rights is a civil right" or that "economic reform depends on political reform" is a significant signal: even the official Chinese news agency has floated similar ideas.

These tentative new shoots of liberal thinking will not push up any concrete in Tiananmen Square, and Beijing needs to do a huge amount more to overcome cynicism. But China does not stand still and a new generation of leaders is beginning to emerge. Let us give the benefit of the doubt, but without selling Western complaisance too cheaply. How many more political prisoners will walk free before Tony Blair goes to Beijing in October?

Britain's mess over migrants

EVERYBODY now agrees — even the Government — that Britain's system for sorting out the genuine refugee fleeing persecution from the economic migrant on the move is in a complete mess. The simplest of statistics tells the story — the backlog of unresolved asylum cases has risen to more than 77,000. Many of the 10,000 people whose applications were lodged before the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Act have waited so long they have put down roots in Britain, married and had children. There is now so much inherent delay that the system has ground to a halt.

In the face of this the last government, as many around Fortress Europe have done, turned to a policy of deterrence. The Conservatives shamefully withdrew welfare benefits from most asylum seekers and stepped up sharply its use of detention. More than 800 are now held, split between detention centres and prisons. As the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbotham, noted in his report on the troubled Campsfield House, near Oxford, the system is overloaded.

The centres were set up in the belief that detainees would be held for no more than six weeks. Instead they are often detained for more than a year. The vast majority are held without charge, trial or judicial review, and they endure the "no-man's land" cruelty of not even knowing the date of their release. They are detained on the say-so not of an independent court but of a senior immigration officer, based on almost arbitrary and complex criteria. They are not even given written reasons for their incarceration. All of this underlines Sir David's conclusion that the criteria and process of detention need to be examined to ensure that "they are readily understood by all involved and that detention is used for the shortest possible time".

Since Labour came to power the Home Office has been seeking a way out of this shambles. Leaks from the Whitehall review teams suggest that there is to be an overhaul of detention. It will be used less to hold asylum seekers who have just arrived in Britain and more for those who are about to be removed or deported. It is also hoped to hold more in private detention centres and fewer in local prisons. But so far there has been no word of action to introduce a judicial oversight, written reasons or regular bail reviews. At the same time the rate at which deportations take place is to be stepped up. It is simply not as easy as it looks on the front page of the Daily Mail, and the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, is unlikely to succeed where his predecessors failed.

The best way to reduce the injustices caused by arbitrary detention is to tackle the massive backlog so that the genuine refugee is not made to suffer for months or even years, hoping for a decision. While we wait for that to happen the minimum judicial safeguards must be introduced to end this national scandal of mass detention without charge or trial.

A grisly triumph of theory over people

Martin Woollacott

WHEN the American correspondent Janet Flanner reported on the Nuremberg Tribunal, she could find no meaning in the proceedings that could be properly related to the enormous crimes before the court.

The defendants were ridiculously preoccupied with internal quarrels over status, and their lawyers were obsessed with upholding the niceties of legal codes that Germany had, for years, happily deformed and violated. Hitler, of course, was not there. But even had he been before the court, it still seems unlikely that "answers" would have been made available.

It is not the case, therefore, that the death of Pol Pot and his "escape" from the trial that was apparently being prepared for him, has cheated the world of a great source of enlightenment on what happened in Cambodia. He himself, in occasional remarks, spoke almost lightly of the killings as "mistakes", and put down the failure of the Cambodian revolution to the Vietnamese, the historical enemies.

Could the tyrant have explained the nature of the tyranny? It is possible that, in court, the contrast between the public Pol Pot, a man of some charm and even humour, and the private man, who was both vindictive and cruelly schematic, would have been pointed up. But would that unmasking have done much to explain why Cambodia entered a period of savage self-destruction after Khmer Rouge troops took the capital in 1975?

It is worth remembering that the actions of the Khmer Rouge then came as a surprise to many who afterwards wondered why they had not known better. They included some of the diplomats and soldiers from the United States who, 23 years ago, were talking of a coalition government in which both the Khmer Rouge and non-communist politicians would play a part, or at least of a "controlled solution" — an orderly transfer of power, honourable arrangements for the disarming of government troops, handover of the central bank and so forth.

What ignorance and madness! Not much later, Phnom Penh had been emptied and every officer the Khmer Rouge could lay their hands on was killed. Those deceiving themselves included some of the politicians who stayed on, a few in expectation that they might indeed have a role, others in the hope that they would at least survive. And they included many of the journalists who knew unpleasant truths about the Khmer Rouge but, in anger at US war-making, tended to romanticise the bare-chested fighters in the paddy fields.

A quarter of a century later, everybody does know better, thanks to the work of such scholars as Ben Kiernan, David Chandler and Michael Vickers, the reflections of rueful reporters such as Sydney Schanberg, and the testimony of such Cambodians as Someth May and Dith Pran.

But the essence of what was then misunderstood is worth restating. It was the power of ideas over people, the triumph of theory over flesh and blood. The simplified version of Maoism, itself already half-baked, which Pol Pot and his top men thought they were putting into practice in Cambodia, easily transmuted into a campaign of racial purification. All but the true, full-blood Khmers, physically untainted by Thai, Vietnamese or Chinese genes, and mentally untouched by poisonous foreign notions, were to be purged, at which point a huge multiplication of national energy and power would be achieved, along with economic self-sufficiency and the defeat of Cambodia's enemy-neighbours.

The reporters vaguely thought they were faced with a would-be inclusive "common front" national movement, when what was coming was a peasant blood-and-soil movement led by men at ease neither in the real peasant society of their parents or grandparents, nor in the little urban world of post-colonial Cambodia. When they put their fantasies into practice, real men and women died in their hundreds of thousands.

Many of the leaders of this terrible campaign are still with us. They include Ieng Sary, one of the Khmer Rouge's three founding figures, who defected to the government two years ago and has even founded a political party, and such lesser men as Ke Pauk, a more recent defector, reckoned to be responsible for slaughtering the Cambodian Muslim community. They may soon include Ta Mok, leader of the Khmer Rouge rump, said to be negotiating with Hun Sen, the former Khmer Rouge commander who has run Cambodia since he tipped out his co-premier, Prince Ranariddh, last July.

SOME of the ordinary men and women who conducted their own private reigns of terror within the larger terror also survive. They were the back-country peasants who had all their teeth capped with gold once they achieved a certain position within the Khmer Rouge structure. They interspersed their enjoyment of new privileges with regular sessions of torture and execution. That they eventually often became victims, either of Khmer Rouge witch-hunts or of that government's inhuman demands, or, after the Vietnamese invasion of 1979, of those they had terrorised, does not excuse their participation. What explains it, in part, was the horrendous division in Cambodian society, made deeper still by war and US bombing, between town and country.

With or without a Pol Pot trial, we understand enough about Cambodia to sense some connections between its pathology and that apparent in places such as Serbia, Bosnia or Algeria. The Cambodia of Year Zero, seen at the time as a communist movement gone wrong, was more to do with a weirdly unrealistic form of regressive nationalism, combining the purification theories of its leaders with the anger and alienation of a largely rural population to produce terrible results. Although every case is different, and the world does move on, similar things can happen again, or are happening. It is an indication of how little, still, we know about these destructive forces that Bosnia and Algeria were almost as much surprises as Cambodia was in 1975.

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'Long view' that leaves businessmen short

OPINION
Andrew Higgins

THERE is a shameful secret at the heart of China's relations with the outside world. It has nothing to do with Tibet, Tiananmen Square or other voices of dissent muffled by ringing cash registers.

Making money is what the world's biggest market is all about. There is no shame about that, say the hard-headed champions of reality over romance. Shameful, though, at least to shareholders, is a truth that many companies in China prefer to keep secret: instead of making money they are losing it.

The problem is usually hidden behind banquet smiles and pledges of long-term commitment. This is nothing new. The seductive power of China's size has long scrambled sound judgment.

In its first issue in October 1946, Hong Kong's Far Eastern Economic Review, reporting on a British trade mission to China, said: "Foreign economic experts in China are not optimistic about immediate promotion of foreign trade with China, so that one has to take the 'long view'."

Half a century on, the chasm between future potential and current profit gapes as wide as ever for many British and other Western firms.

Taking the long view has become the anthem of the China trade. Beijing has pulled off an extraordinary coup. Businessmen have become its most dogged allies abroad. Whether in the White House, Downing Street or the Elysée, the Chinese Communist Party's corporate cheerleaders lobby loyally, urging their governments to go softly on human rights, lift controls on the export of sensitive technology and otherwise accommodate Beijing.

Yet Beijing is buying most of its friends on credit. A recent survey of 1,200 German companies in China revealed that four out of five have not made enough to recoup even their investment. In a separate poll supported by the European Commission, 54 per cent of managers said their firms had performed worse than planned, and 62 per cent said they had over-estimated the potential of the market.

Beijing's ministry of finance reports that 61 per cent of the 56,000 foreign-invested companies in China lost money last year. Statistics showing a marked slow-down in the Chinese economy in the first three months of this year further dim the prospects for profit.

Anywhere else there would be a stampede for the door. Not in China. Companies tell their shareholders to take a "long view".

Peering doggedly into a forever receding horizon is Britain's Cable & Wireless. It did everything it could to crack a market so elusive it is almost mythical. It sold part of its most valuable property, Hong Kong Telecom, to Chinese interests last summer. It recruited Lord Howe, the former British foreign secretary, to pull strings.

Beijing was delighted. "Howe's words wake up people of Hong Kong: opposition is useless," read a headline in the party's main Hong Kong mouthpiece. But like many firms mesmerised by China's prospects and eager to please, Cable & Wireless is still waiting for its reward. Last year its chief executive, Richard Brown, spoke excitedly about "future co-operation on a wide range of telecoms ventures". The result so far: nothing.

Rupert Murdoch has scarcely more to show for his grovelling. His decision to axe Chris Patten's book may have cheered a few bureaucrats in Beijing but it gravely damaged his reputation in the countries where he makes his real money.

Occasionally patience snaps. The United States company Caterpillar has just finished a messy divorce with a Chinese partner in Shanghai. It pulled out after losing millions. General Electric has waged a noisy feud with a Chinese light-bulb plant. But while foreign businessmen grumble in hotel bars across China, most wear fixed smiles for more public outings.

The Chinese Communist Party, by contrast, keeps an unflinching eye on its own economic and political self-interest.

When the head of what used to be western Europe's biggest communist party, Massimo d'Alema of the Italian Party of the Democratic Left, visited Beijing last week he tried to probe his hosts' beliefs beyond the bottom line. He got nowhere.

"I asked about the ideological situation in the party and they did not answer," he said. "All they wanted to talk about was economic growth, the amount of investment, the number of cars . . . It was all just business."

Until the West takes a similarly clear view of its own business, neither companies nor human rights will profit.

In Brief

FOLLOWING a tense meeting of G7 finance ministers in Washington, the United States reported an all-time record $12.1 billion trade deficit, while Japan revealed a trade surplus of $9.4 billion for March, a 57 per cent increase on the corresponding period last year. US officials blamed the poor figures on a continued fall-off in exports to battered economies in Asia. Japan has agreed to take steps to boost domestic demand.

THANKS partly to its diamonds, Botswana had the fastest-growing economy over the past three decades — per capita income grew at 9.2 per cent from 1965-96 — followed by South Korea and China, according to a World Bank report. World Development Indicators 1998 gives an upbeat picture for the developing world, but says sub-Saharan Africa is not expected to meet growth targets to reduce poverty by half by 2015.

THE new European Central Bank is to be answerable to elected officials after an agreement between the European Parliament and the legislatures of the 15 member states, but the European Union is still wrangling over the bank's first head.

GKN and Finmeccanica of Italy unveiled plans to merge Westland and Agusta in a move that would create the world's second-largest helicopter maker, with expected annual sales of $1.6 billion.

BRITAIN'S public sector borrowing requirement for 1997-98 fell to $1.5 billion, the lowest level for seven years, giving the UK Chancellor, Gordon Brown scope, to relax his tight grip on public spending.

COURTAULD, one of Britain's oldest corporate names, has agreed to to a $3 billion takeover by Akzo Nobel, the Dutch chemicals group.

VOLKSWAGEN is planning to re-open the bid battle for Rolls-Royce Motors despite BMW's win in a private auction.

Millions made jobless

ASIA'S economic crisis is throwing millions out of work, wiping out years of progress against poverty and risking social unrest, the International Labour Organisation warned last week, *writes Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong*.

It predicted that unemployment would treble in Indonesia, Thailand and South Korea, the countries hardest hit by the turmoil that began last year on foreign exchange markets. The currencies have largely stabilised but the social pain and risk of political instability will increase in the coming months.

The collapse of what had been rapidly rising economic expectations and the absence of any safety net in most Asian countries has created "fertile ground for breeding social unrest", said the report, which will be presented to trade union and government officials in Bangkok next week.

Most vulnerable are migrant workers and women, the backbone of a cheap, mobile and docile labour force that powered the region's now spluttering "economic miracle". The number of migrant labourers grew from about a million in the early 1980s to more than 6.5 million last year, many of whom now face not only unemployment but expulsion as the factories that employ them seize up.

The World Bank said last week that the number of Indonesians living in poverty would more than double to 20 million.

With the exception of South Korea, Asian countries have weak labour movements and a legacy of authoritarian traditions. China and Indonesia, east Asia's biggest countries, permit only state-controlled unions.

Asia's jobless rate is unlikely to go beyond the highest levels seen in western Europe or the former Soviet bloc, but is potentially more explosive because of the weak or non-existent welfare provisions.

Students confront police in Bandung, in Indonesia PHOTO: PIKIRAN RAYKAT

Euro set to be criminals' currency of choice

Mark Atkinson

CRIMINALS the world over will soon be able to pack their stash away in much smaller suitcases thanks to Europe's planned single currency.

A new study says that once euro banknotes begin circulating in 2002 they will quickly rival dollar bills as the underworld's currency of choice because they will be issued in higher denominations, allowing the same value of dirty money to be concealed in smaller places.

The European Central Bank, which will manage the euro on behalf of the 11 countries expected to use the currency, is aiming to issue notes for 100, 200 and 500 euros — each worth much more than the highest-denomination US bill, $100. At a euro/dollar exchange rate of 1.10, the high-value euro notes will correspond to $110, $220 and $550.

Writing in a new book* on the euro published last week for the London-based think-tank, Centre for Economic Policy Research, Kenneth Rogoff, of Princeton university, says notes of this size in a currency from a low-inflation economy will be attractive to criminals all over the world.

Instead of lugging thick wads of $100 bills in suitcases, as they do now, they will be able to pack $1 million worth of 500 euro notes into a handbag. Prof Rogoff says demand for and supply of hard currency banknotes, particularly large-denomination ones, has been growing faster over the past two decades than the economies themselves, despite the development of electronic money.

Since few legitimate business transactions are in cash, and the general public own up to holding only relatively small quantities of banknotes, Prof Rogoff concludes that most of the growth is linked to the development of the black economy and the developing world's appetite for a safe, reliable currency.

He estimates that 25-30 per cent of the $1.3 trillion supply of currency from the industrialised countries represented by the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development is held by developing countries, mostly in dollars.

Some of that demand is above-board. Dollars are in wide use in Latin America, especially Argentina, where official shipments of dollar bills during the 1990s have exceeded $40 billion, and in the former Soviet bloc; more than $60 billion has been shipped to Russia in recent years. But other heavy users of dollars include the mafia and drug barons.

Prof Rogoff suggests the ECB should either cancel its plans for large-denomination banknotes or place reporting requirements on them. The decision to issue the high-denomination notes in the first place was designed to accommodate Germany, which issues D-Marks up to a face value of DM1,000 ($540) each.

*EMU: Prospects and Challenges for the Euro, published by Blackwell

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates April 20	Sterling rates April 6
Australia	2.5977-2.6011	2.5138-2.5182
Austria	21.27-21.29	21.51-21.53
Belgium	62.45-62.55	63.08-63.20
Canada	2.3938-2.3961	2.3537-2.3559
Denmark	11.53-11.54	11.66-11.67
France	10.13-10.14	10.25-10.33
Germany	3.0239-3.0269	3.0586-3.0614
Hong Kong	13.00-13.01	12.86-12.87
Ireland	1.1989-1.2013	1.2132-1.2157
Italy	2,989-2,992	3,018-3,022
Japan	221.81-222.09	223.59-223.84
Netherlands	3.4052-3.4080	3.4447-3.4476
New Zealand	3.0247-3.0001	3.0112-3.0169
Norway	12.63-12.65	12.70-12.72
Portugal	309.94-310.27	313.21-313.58
Spain	256.96-257.15	259.47-259.69
Sweden	12.96-12.97	13.30-13.32
Switzerland	2.5069-2.5098	2.6373-2.6405
USA	1.6761-1.6790	1.6601-1.6611
ECU	1.5257-1.5276	1.5404-1.5423

FTSE100 Share Index down 181.7 at 5954.1. FTSE 250 Index down 31.5 at 5568.4. Gold down [illegible] at $307.35

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The same law for farmers

EDITORIAL

ONE had grown accustomed to the annual spectacle of strawberry growers from the Garonne valley attacking Spanish lorries. This year there has been a change: Breton cauliflower growers have caused more than $1 million worth of damage to railway installations. And, as often happens when farmers from the Brittany *départements* of Finistère and Côtes-d'Armor vent their anger, they have done so with a violence that is out of all proportion and quite unjustifiable.

The fruit and vegetable sector, which gets less media coverage than cereals or beef, is fragmented and ill-equipped to resist pressure from middlemen, wholesalers and heads of buying groups. Although dominated by Italy and Spain, it remains a vital source of income and jobs in several French regions. Cavaillon, St-Paul-de-Léon, Marmande and Perpignan owe their reputation to the quality of their melons, cauliflowers, tomatoes and lettuces.

It is a sector that is highly vulnerable to climatic conditions, which can disrupt cultivation as well as consumption (as they have in the cauliflower trade, where oversupply has coincided with flagging demand). It is also a sector that suffers from high welfare costs, and which cannot rely on its export trade as heavily as some other branches of agriculture. On top of that, it is hard hit by imports.

The fury of the vegetable growers is understandable given the huge European Union subsidies paid out to cereal growers in the fertile Beauce plain or stockbreeders in the Massif Central.

The imminent reform of the Common Agricultural Policy hardly concerns them, since the common organisation of the market in their particular sector was introduced last year. It forces vegetable growers, among other things, to dip into their pockets whenever the EU helps them. The latest report of the French farmers' union, FNSEA, notes that "producers are going to have to discipline themselves".

Destroying railway signalling systems and burning vehicles have never served the cause of those who resort to such methods. The fast-shrinking farming sector continues to receive, through taxes and the EU budget, an amount of aid that several farmers' union leaders persist in regarding — wrongly — as established rights. Such aid was perhaps not always granted as fairly as it might have been. That is why the present process of redeploying state aid is a step in the right direction.

The farming minister, Louis Le Pinsec, and the junior trade minister, Marylise Lebranchu, have been quick to condemn the damage caused by Breton farmers, while still keeping the lines of communication open. They have shown the government's determination not to allow farmers to enjoy an exorbitant degree of tolerance. Law and order should be the rule in the countryside, just as it is in schools and suburban housing estates.

(April 14)

Dumped cauliflowers block a road near Morlaix in Brittany last week during a protest by farmers PHOTO FRANCK PREVEL

Guinea cracks down on the opposition

Thomas Sotinel in Abidjan

THE political stability of the West African country of Guinea has been slowly deteriorating during the run-up to the presidential election, due in December.

First, journalists were arrested or expelled; now there has been a crackdown on opposition members of parliament. On April 14, five of them were arrested and jailed despite the parliamentary immunity to which they are entitled according to both the constitution and the internal regulations of the national assembly.

One of the arrested men is Bâ Mamadou, leader of the National Union of Republicans (UNR), who was appointed by the other opposition parties to lead the Co-ordination of Democratic Opposition grouping.

Guinea is widely regarded as the West African country most likely to experience the kind of turmoil that recently devastated Liberia and Sierra Leone.

A seditious army that almost overthrew President Lansana Conté in 1996, political parties structured almost exclusively along ethnic lines, and an economy that has still not recovered from the damage it suffered during Sekou Touré's 25-year-long dictatorship are all factors that excite antagonism and encourage violence.

Mamadou and two other UNR members of parliament were arrested after violent clashes at the end of March between security forces and the inhabitants of the Kaporo district on the outskirts of the capital, Conakry.

The trouble began with a "clearance" operation of the kind that regularly takes place in all African capitals: bulldozers were sent in to demolish a shanty town and make way for a motorway and an administrative complex.

But according to Thierno Maadjou Sow, president of the Guinean Human Rights Organisation, the demolition gangs were "accompanied by women who hurled abuse at the community" in Kaporo. The district is mostly inhabited by Fulah from the region of Fouta Djalon.

With support of their imams — Guinea is 95 per cent Muslim — the inhabitants reacted to the insults by chanting songs that date from the 17th century, when the Fulah nobility waged a series of holy wars. The clashes left nine people dead and more than 50 injured.

In the following days the authorities arrested the three members of parliament belonging to the UNR (a mainly Fulah party) and some 50 other people, including imams, on charges of "complicity in murder". They claimed it was a case of *in flagrante delicto*, even though Mamadou, for example, was not present during the clashes.

It later transpired that two members of the Rally of the Guinean People (RPG), a mainly Malinké party, had also been arrested during a political meeting. The backbone of the opposition in Guinea consists of two large ethnic groups, the Fulah and the Malinké, who form the majority of the population in Fouta Djalon and Upper Guinea respectively.

President Conté and some members of his entourage are Susu from the coastal region. The exercise of authority and the resulting leverage it provides have enabled them to establish a power base that is out of all proportion to the size of the Susu community, which is very small.

For the time being, the more moderate members of the president's camp — the prime minister, Sydia Touré, and the president of the national assembly, Boubacar Biro Diallo — have failed to react to the jailings. This suggests that hardliners in Conté's entourage are now getting their way.

General Conté, who came to power following Sekou Touré's death in 1984 after being chosen as leader by his fellow officers because he was the longest-serving high-ranking officer, has already proved he is a political survivor.

In 1993, after a poll marked by considerable violence, Conté was elected president under circumstances that were questioned not only by his opponents but by international observers.

In 1996 he was almost killed in the course of a mutiny that turned into an attempted coup. The trial of the rebels, which opened last February, once again revealed the lamentable state of an army, which is badly paid and demoralised by its peacekeeping interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, during which soldiers were able to compare their situation with that of their counterparts in other countries in the region.

ADVOCATES of dialogue and a less hardline approach seem unable to prevent the country from falling apart. After the attempted coup of 1996 Conté created the post of prime minister, to which he appointed Touré, an economist who had spent all of his career up to then in Ivory Coast.

As soon as he took office Touré decided to end the tradition of bureaucratic corruption that had been bequeathed by both the colonial system and Sekou Touré's "revolutionary" ideology.

Within months he had provided Conakry with electricity, a feat that earned him the nickname "Sydia Current" among the population. But very soon Conté reportedly took umbrage at the popularity of his prime minister and carried out a ministerial reshuffle that robbed Touré of much of his power.

Similarly Diallo, who is president of the national assembly, where Conté's Popular Unity Party (PUP) has a comfortable majority, has succeeded in creating a good working environment unparalleled elsewhere in the region — opposition deputies, for example, have been able to get bills adopted.

It now looks as though these achievements are doomed. Guinea is a country that has always delighted the prophets of doom. This time it looks as though they are about to have a field day.

(April 16)

Food crisis overshadows Korea talks

Philippe Pons in Tokyo

ON APRIL 11, just after a team of French doctors belonging to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) had reported evidence of alarming food shortages in North Korea near the border with China, talks between North and South Korea got under way again in Beijing.

Some progress was made in the negotiations. According to the Agence France-Presse news agency, Jon Kum-chol, the head of the North Korean delegation, said: "We have reached an agreement in principle, but we need to continue talks so as to narrow our differences of viewpoint."

One of the topics under discussion is the contribution by South Korea of 200,000 tonnes of chemical fertiliser to its northern neighbour. In return, Seoul is asking Pyongyang to make concessions on the question of reuniting separated families.

The restart of talks is politically significant — it marks the first meeting of official representatives of the two Koreas for four years. It is also important because of the worsening food situation in North Korea. The gravity of the famine can be judged from eyewitness reports by refugees and by Chinese who have been able to visit North Korea that acts of cannibalism have taken place.

According to the MSF report, published in Beijing on April 11, starving civilians have also been involved in acts of violence and looting. It is reported that corpses have been abandoned by the roadside, and that disease is rampant among the debilitated population.

The North Korean authorities have admitted that the situation has worsened. Last week Pyongyang Radio took note of the "grave worries about the way food reserves are running out" that have been expressed by the head of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), Catherine Bertini, who has just visited North Korea.

Farming there has suffered not only from collectivist policies, but from three consecutive years of devastating floods, which have caused a serious food shortage. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) says North Korea will need to import 1.9 million tonnes of foodstuffs in 1998 in order to feed its 24 million inhabitants.

In January the WFP launched its biggest emergency aid operation for North Korea and called for 650,000 tonnes of foodstuffs to be contributed in 1998. The United States responded to the appeal by promising 200,000 tonnes. At the end of March, in the course of talks between Red Cross organisations in the two Koreas, South Korea pledged to supply 50,000 tonnes. The first consignments of that aid are due to arrive this week.

But the great unknown factor, which could put off donors and delay deliveries, is the question of who the beneficiaries of that aid should be. Will it go to the population at large, or be given first to the regime's élite and the army?

Refugees questioned by MSF doctors have said that only a strict minimum of foodstuffs and medicines are reaching the civilian population. "Foreigners came to check that cereals were being distributed to the population," a Chinese teacher from the border town of Tumen explained to MSF. "But after they had gone, the government collected the sacks and no more was heard of the food aid."

Speaking in Beijing on April 12 after her visit to North Korea, Bertini said that the WFP might reduce its food aid to Pyongyang if the authorities there continue to prevent donor countries from monitoring the final destination of their contributions.

(April 14)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Poland's bid to join the European Union leaves Ukraine on the wrong side of a cultural divide, as **Natalie Nougayrède** discovers on a visit to Lvov

Much disquiet on the Western front

LVOV, a city in northwestern Ukraine that is arguably as beautiful as Prague or Krakow, has an identity problem. Should it be called Lvov, its now most commonly used name and the one it went by when it was part of the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1991? Or Lviv, as the Ukrainians themselves call it? Or Lwow, its name when it belonged to Poland from 1349 to 1772? Or Lemberg, as it was known to the Austrians, who ruled the city from 1772 and 1918 and made it the capital of Galicia?

"Religion and the Ukrainian identity" was the topic of one of the informal meetings that Taras Vozniak organises at his city hall office once or twice a month. The evening was attended by a score of philosophers, sociologists, students and artists.

Although apparently forbidding, the subject under debate prompted a lively discussion that went on into the small hours and was rounded off by singing, platefuls of sausages and plenty of vodka. By the end of the session the office looked like a smoke-filled café. The topic of the previous meeting, "Polish-Ukrainian relations", had apparently been discussed with similar vigour.

Lvov intellectuals seem to feel they have been invested with the task of ensuring that their region of eastern Galicia, which has long been regarded as the repository of the Ukrainian language and identity, remains anchored to the "civilised" world of the West.

The enlargement of the European Union and of Nato has raised hopes in Lvov. But there are also worries that a new dividing line will separate the countries destined to join the great family of the West and those doomed to remain in the unpredictable sphere of Russian influence. Might not Ukraine, a central European giant wedged between Russia and Poland, find itself on the wrong side of the tracks? Lvov lies on the watershed.

Vozniak, the Lvov city councillor in charge of foreign relations, believes in an independent, democratic and pro-Western Ukraine. His worry is that an "iron curtain" may be about to descend on his city of 830,000 inhabitants.

He fears that, with Polish membership of the EU in the pipeline, the Polish-Ukrainian border, 80km west of Lvov, which has been open since the collapse of the Soviet Union, could suddenly be closed.

Trade with Poland has become Lvov's lifeline. Only two large companies are still in operation in the city, a Coca-Cola plant and a chocolate factory. Eastern Galicia has been hard hit by recession and falling output in Ukraine as a whole. Many salaries remain unpaid.

"Between 60 and 70 per cent of articles in the shops here are Polish or have passed through Poland," says an official. There is trafficking of all kinds at the border. Lvov, still trapped in the poor and mismanaged economic environment bequeathed by the Soviet system, lies on the fringe of a fast-growing central Europe.

Thousands of Ukrainians cross the border every day to buy consumer goods, which they then resell back home. Others get hired as labourers on Polish building sites. Street stalls and shops in Lvov are packed with imported tinned foods, bananas, shampoo, light bulbs and Walkmans. Unofficial import networks extend into the most remote corners of provincial Ukraine.

At weekends crowds of people carrying kitbags full of goods pile on to the electric train that runs between Lvov and the nearby town of Drogobych, in the undulating countryside of Transcarpathia. Two teenagers worm their way through, one of them selling a new tyre, the other some perfume samples.

A Western businessman seems lost in the crowds milling around in the lobby of Lvov's Grand Hotel. He turns out to be the sales rep of a leading washing powder manufacturer. "This region is the pits for us," he confides. "There's a huge amount of smuggling. The Poles find it all the easier to compete with us because they don't pay any VAT. I often wonder where all the money from the trafficking goes. The standard of living here is low. I've had a look at the area around Lvov. There are few foreign cars, and the roads are full of potholes."

At the beginning of the year, under pressure from the EU, which wants its eastern borders to be tightened, Poland agreed to impose travel restrictions on visitors from the former Soviet republics. People in Lvov thought that the black market on which they rely was about to be stamped out. But it turned out to be a false alarm: the only people facing a clampdown were nationals from Russia and Belarus, two states which, unlike Ukraine and Lithuania, had not entered into an agreement with Poland to take back illegal immigrants.

Warsaw is, however, talking of introducing a visa system for all its eastern neighbours. A Ukrainian stallholder selling imported toys, soap, toothpaste and aspirins is unhappy. "Surely it's only normal we should be allowed to go to Poland. There was a time when the Poles used to come here," she complains, referring to the period of high inflation endured by the Poles in the early nineties, which encouraged them to shop in Ukraine.

People's memories go back a long time in this part of Europe, which was fought over for centuries by the great imperial powers, turned into a battlefield during two world wars, and then trapped in the steely embrace of the Soviet Union.

There is an old dispute which the Warsaw and Kiev governments have done their best to bury since the fall of the communism. "There has been a lot of talk about Franco-German reconciliation and German-Polish reconciliation," Vozniak says. "But the reconciliation of the Poles and Ukrainians is equally important for Europe."

Lvov is the symbolic site of that reconciliation. In his book Europe: A History, the British historian Norman Davies draws a comparison between Lvov and the French city of Strasbourg. He describes them as two "cosmopolitan capitals" of provinces containing several nationalities, and points out that, while Alsace passed from French to German hands and back four times before 1945, eastern Galicia has been fought over at least six times by Austrians, Poles and Ukrainians.



During their visit to Lvov on January 4, the Polish president, Alexander Kwasniewski, and his Ukrainian opposite number, Leonid Kuchma, went to Lychakov cemetery where they laid wreaths on the graves of Poles and Ukrainians killed during the 1918-19 war between the two countries. Their gesture broke new ground. During the Soviet period the shared cemetery was vandalised and allowed to go to rack and ruin. The visit by the two heads of state came after the signing in May 1997 of a "declaration of understanding and reconciliation", in which Poland and Ukraine regretted their "mutual wrongs", notably during wars that they waged against each other in the 17th century.

Lvov, still trapped by the Soviet system, lies on the fringe of a fast-growing central Europe

Lvov concluded from that rapprochement that Ukraine would be anchored to Europe thanks to support from its Polish "partner". On the Polish side, the official line was that "a free and sovereign Ukraine that is independent of Russia is a guarantee that Moscow will not return to its imperial policies".

Igor Fedik is a history teacher who likes to share his love of Lvov with visitors. He points out its mixture of influences — its Polish cathedral, "the only Roman Catholic church in Ukraine", its Armenian quarter, whose population was deported in 1939, its Old Jewess Street and the remains of the Golden Rose synagogue, which serve as a reminder that there was a 130,000-strong Jewish community in Lvov before the war, and its St Yury church, the focal point of the local Greek Catholic church, which is once again challenging the supremacy of the Russian Orthodox church in Ukraine.

Lvov lies on a religious faultline. It is a place where the Catholic and Orthodox worlds collide with each other in what some have called "the battle for souls".

It is generally agreed that in the past few years religious tensions have eased. But the upshot has been a certain confusion. "There are 60 churches in Lvov," Fedik says. "And it's impossible to tell which confessions they represent. The largest buildings tend to be Greek Catholic, but many of them are shared with Orthodox congregations. Worshippers attend services alternately, according to a fixed schedule."

After a long stroll through streets lined with buildings whose ochre façades, cherubs and telamons are typical of Austro-Hungarian architecture, Fedik paused in front of No 10 Market Square, a house decorated in Gothic style. He then launched into a reverential account of the fate of the "patriot" Stefan Bandera.

The son of a Greek Catholic priest, Bandera was convinced that only acts of terrorism could bring about Ukraine's independence. In 1934, when he was head of an underground extremist group, he organised the murder of the Polish interior minister in Warsaw.

It was at 10 Market Square that he proclaimed the independence of Ukraine, on June 30, 1941, while the Nazis were occupying Lvov. The Gestapo arrested him and charged him with "conspiracy". He was sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where he spent four years.

After the war, the Soviet authorities killed his parents and deported his three daughters to Siberia. In 1959, when he was living in exile in Munich and still running the nationalist Ukrainian party, Oun, Bandera was shot dead by a KGB agent.

Lvov's former Stalin Street has been renamed Bandera Street. Another thoroughfare has been called after the late president of Chechenia, Dzhokhar Dudayev, who also rebelled against the Kremlin.

The existence of fierce anti-Russian feeling in Lvov prompts Vozniak to remark: "The strength and the weakness of our region is that it will always fight for Ukraine's right to exist." During the Gorbachev period, Lvov spearheaded the separatist movement. In Ukraine's recent general election, which the communists won, it was in the Lvov region that nationalists did best.

The historian Miroslav Popovic, a respected observer of the political scene who hails from Galicia but has long lived in Kiev, thinks the era of confrontation is now over. Sitting behind his desk at the Philosophy Institute, he plays down the differences between the Lvov region, with its Polish and Austro-Hungarian past, and the eastern part of the Ukraine, which has long been dominated by the Russians.

"People in western Ukraine — Galicia — can't understand how we, the inhabitants of the centre and east of the country, handle our relationship with the Russians," he says. "Their model of a national relationship was the relationship between Poland and Ukraine, in other words between a dominant aristocratic class and the peasantry. The relationship between Ukrainians and Russians was never like that: the term Ukrainian was a purely ethnic epithet.

"Two-thirds of the Ukrainian population speak Russian. In the east of the country a politician who spoke Ukrainian would not be accepted by voters. People in western Ukraine forget that if few Ukrainian schools have opened in the east it's because people there aren't ready for them and don't want them.

"You have to remember that Ukraine used to be a stronghold of the Soviet military-industrial complex, which employed 40 per cent of the urban population. The language read by all those people when they were mugging up on bombs, tanks and missiles was Russian. I speak Ukrainian at home, but as soon as I talk about sociology, even with my brother, I switch to Russian. It's the language I was educated in."

Popovic, a believer in a "softly softly" approach to independence based on an attitude of tolerance, seems to be sending a message to Vozniak and other Lvov intellectuals when he affirms: "Of course plenty of books need to be translated into Ukrainian, as there is a serious shortage of books in that language. But that is no reason to cut off links with the Russians, for our civilisation forms a whole with theirs."

(April 10)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

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Summit Reaffirms Trade Zone Plans

Anthony Faiola and Thomas W. Lippman in Santiago

THE SECOND Summit of the Americas ended here last Sunday with President Clinton and 33 other Western Hemisphere leaders signing a declaration that promised everything from a rethinking of the drug war to negotiations that could create the world's largest free-trade zone.

Clinton underscored his belief that a greater pool of people must benefit from those changes if they are to hold. The Americas have undergone a "profound revolution in the last few years, a revolution of peace and freedom and prosperity," the president said.

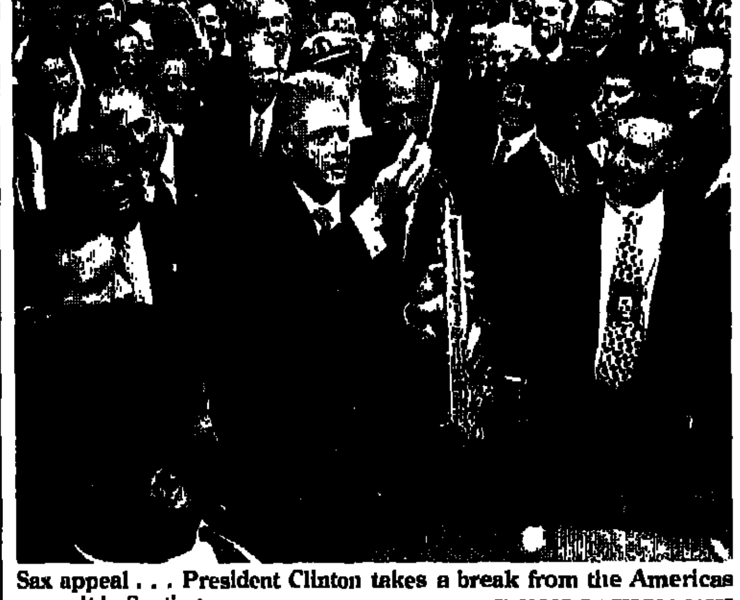
"Here in Santiago, we embrace our responsibility to make these historic forces lift the lives of all our people . . . It is a future worthy of the new Americas in a new millennium."

In Latin America, which has long been the inferior partner in a generally paternalistic relationship with the United States, the summit is widely viewed as a key turning point in equalizing that relationship. Latin officials, for instance, believe a great a leap forward was made in the creation here of a Multilateral Counter Drug Alliance that would use the Organization of American States as a tool to evaluate each nation's record of combating drug trafficking — a process seen here as a potential alternative to the highly disparaged U.S. procedure of "certifying" the anti-drug cooperation of individual nations.

However, the new relationship manifested itself in a number of ways not pleasing to the Americans. One clear indication of hemispheric willingness to question U.S. policy came in the form of private calls for reinstatement of Cuba to the OAS and in public declarations that Cuban President Fidel Castro should be included in future hemispheric summits.

On the heels of Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba in January, it was revealed last weekend that Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, who will host the next summit, possibly in 2000, has accepted an invitation to visit Havana this week, becoming the first Canadian leader to do so in 21 years. Meanwhile, other leaders here spoke of ending Cuba's isolation.

"The exclusion of Cuba is unfair because that country isn't a threat to anyone," Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori told reporters. "The Cuban president should have been allowed to come here and express his point of view and to listen to criticism of him."



Sax appeal . . . President Clinton takes a break from the Americas summit in Santiago PHOTOGRAPH: PEDRO UGARTE

But the Cuba issue was one of the few divisive notes in what was generally a diplomatic love fest. Indeed, the language of the final communique is so lofty that it almost echoes Marxist utopian rhetoric from bygone generations — the difference being that trade and capital markets, rather than economic collectivism, are offered as the keys to a happier future for the region.

As expected, the summit participants agreed to a strict schedule of negotiations for a proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas, despite the fact that Clinton arrived in the Chilean capital without "fast track" authority — the power to sign trade accords that Congress could then only vote up or down, without amendment.

The 34-page "plan of action" goes on to address everything from new techniques to combat the drug trade to standards for transporting nuclear waste through the Panama Canal. Other new drug proposals include hemispheric efforts to crack down on money laundering, combat drug addiction and support "alternative development" programs that would give farmers who grow drug-producing plants the incentive to cultivate legal crops.

The summit plan also focused on combating illiteracy and pledged to "ensure, by the year 2010, universal access to and completion of quality primary education for 100 percent of children and access for at least 75 percent of young people to quality secondary education." To reach that goal, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank have already committed $6 billion in concessionary loans for education over the next three years.

The plan calls further for a strengthening of the judicial systems in Latin America — still among the region's weakest institutions — through creation of a new justice center that would train judges and prosecutors on applications of law. The document also outlines a tighter regulation of the region's banking system, greater cooperation in rooting out money laundering and greater participation in U.N. peacekeeping missions by Latin America militaries.

Indeed, at the same time as the United States engages in a new partnership mentality toward Latin America, the nations in the hemisphere appear more willing to work with Washington to address their social and economic problems.

"You now have recognition by all these governments of the need to rebuild civil society at the local level," one senior U.S. official said. At the first summit of the Americas, in Miami in 1994, he said, "we couldn't get that recognized. Some of them wouldn't even talk about it."

A Law Unto Themselves

OPINION
Jim Hoagland

WHEN the concepts of national interest and local justice collided the other day over Virginia's intention to execute a foreigner convicted of murder, U.S. national interest came out second. A distant third was the stumbling but now inescapable march toward an international criminal justice system.

The police blotter details are simple: Angel Francisco Breard, 32, told an Arlington jury that he was acting under the influence of a satanic curse when he stabbed Ruth Dickie, 39, five times in the neck during a sexual assault in 1992.

There is nothing in the case to suggest that Breard was railroaded or that capital punishment was a cruel and unusual act in the context of the U.S. judicial system. But the fact that Breard was a Paraguayan citizen who had not been advised by local police of his right, established by international treaty, to consult with a Paraguayan diplomat at the time of arrest lifted this case off the blotter into an affair of state.

The Breard case in its own way touches on a central question of statecraft at the end of the 20th century: What role will the United States play in fashioning an international criminal justice system that reflects and accompanies the increased interdependence of nations created by the commercial and technological forces of globalization?

The United States praises and actively works to spread that interdependence when it benefits American corporations, investors and workers abroad. But U.S. institutions still resist accepting the kind of mutual limitations on sovereignty that other countries have accepted to enhance interdependence.

This conundrum surfaced clearly in the Breard case. In appealing for a delay in the execution, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright pointed out to Virginia Gov. James S. Gilmore III that American citizens arrested abroad would be more vulnerable to having their right to consular access denied if Virginia did not give some sign of recognizing the obligations imposed on all its signatories by the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

Albright sought only a delay in the execution and further discussion of the case. But Gilmore refused her plea 90 minutes after the U.S. Supreme Court brushed off an order from the International Court of Justice in The Hague to stay the execution, which was carried out by lethal injection on April 14.

The court was not expressing a political judgment. But culturally the majority ruling reflects a deeply ingrained American attitude of exceptionalism. The same attitude underlies strong opposition at the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill to efforts at the United Nations to create a new International Criminal Court that would be able to subpoena and even try American citizens, along with all other nationalities, in war crimes trials.

It is not enough to glory in the spread of the Internet or of open capital markets or of U.S.-dominated military alliances. Those are instruments, not values. America should be shaping the new judicial system to come, not standing completely outside it.

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Nigerians Fear a No-Contest Election

James Rupert in Lagos

NIGERIA'S military ruler, Gen. Sani Abacha, is preparing an election in August for a president to lead Nigeria's first civilian government in 15 years. State television, government officials and newspaper ads placed by Abacha loyalists say he is the only man for the job and will be a sure winner.

But according to virtually everyone else a visitor meets in Nigeria these days, what is being prepared is not a real election — and if it were, Abacha would be booted out of power.

"These people [in government] are thieves. If we had a choice, no one would keep them there," said Ben Opara recently as he sought shade and, if possible, work, on a sweltering Lagos street corner.

In Abacha's sixth year as Nigeria's head of state, people line up for hours or days for gasoline. State-owned electrical grids, railroads and phone systems barely function, largely because corrupt officials siphon off their funds, Western and Nigerian economists say. U.N. studies say half of Nigerians have no access to basic health services or safe drinking water and rate the country's overall level of development just ahead that of Congo, formerly known as Zaire.

Nigerians say their nation, as Africa's biggest oil producer, should be one of its wealthiest, and many are angry at its failings. But even more, they say, they are exhausted, dispirited and apathetic.

"Many people . . . have almost resigned themselves to whatever happens," said Joseph Otteh, who heads a pro-democracy organization in Lagos, the Social and Economic Rights Action Center. "The main thing has become how to work out their survival in a very harsh economic climate."

Abacha's most prominent political challengers in recent years have been jailed, exiled, assassinated or executed. "The economic collapse has gutted the middle class, and repression has decapitated any alternative leadership" to Abacha, said a Nigerian political scientist who asked not to be named.

As a result, Nigerians "will be forced to accept his reimposition," a prospect that risks civil upheaval, said Sam Amadi, an attorney with United Action for Democracy, an anti-Abacha alliance of labor, professional and civic movements. "There is a very serious possibility of the various ethnic groups deciding to go their different ways," raising fears of civil war, Amadi said.



Nigerian soldiers hold back pro-democracy supporters outside a soccer stadium in Ibadan last week

Nigerian and foreign analysts disagree over the likelihood of a broad upheaval, but even the possibility is worrisome for this continent. The roughly 100 million Nigerians represent a sixth of the population of sub-Saharan Africa, and any breakdown in order here would overwhelm the region with refugees.

Abacha, 54, is the latest of many soldiers who have ruled Nigeria for 28 of its 38 years of independence. Like his predecessors, Abacha declares that only his rule has saved Nigeria from disintegrating along ethnic lines. British colonizers had joined the homelands of three major ethnic groups — the Hausa-Fulani in the north, Yorubas in the west and Ibos in the east — into a colony they named Nigeria, which gained independence in 1960.

Abacha rose to prominence as a key aide to Maj. Gen. Mohammed Buhari, who toppled Nigeria's last civilian government at the end of 1983, and to Buhari's successor, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. Both leaders, like Abacha, were northerners.

Babangida promised a transition to civilian rule but aborted a 1993 presidential election that a Yoruba southerner, Moshood Abiola, had apparently won. Babangida handed power to a hastily installed civilian-military interim government, but Abacha seized power outright three months later.

Abacha's rule quickly turned repressive. He had Abiola arrested for claiming to be Nigeria's legitimate president. He drew global condemnation for overseeing, in 1995, the execution of nine ethnic Ogoni environmental activists, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, who had been convicted of murder.

At the same time, Abacha began a tightly controlled transition intended to inaugurate civilian rule on October 1, 1998, and promised that he would not run for president. He had a constitution drafted for the civilian government but has kept it secret. He appointed the election officials who licensed five political parties — all of which have called for Abacha to become the sole candidate for the presidency.

In Washington, the Clinton administration is in the final stages of a policy review on Nigeria that has split the president's senior advisers, administration officials said.

One group, reportedly headed by Jesse L. Jackson, who serves as Clinton's special envoy to Africa, is supporting greater engagement with the Abacha government in hopes of influencing the political transition. The other group, said to be led by Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice, favors greater efforts to isolate and undermine Abacha.

With four months left before the presidential election, Abacha has not declared himself a candidate but has done nothing to discourage a campaign by aides and allies calling for him to stay in power.

Nigerian scholars say that, with Abacha willing to use troops and police against dissidents, no one can defeat him in an election. Two candidates have declared themselves — a Lagos attorney and a former police chief under Abacha who is described by many Nigerians as a stalking horse for the general.

Real opposition to Abacha can come only from within the Nigerian military's officer corps, observers say. "Abacha faces an endemic challenge from the younger ranks, who want their turn at the trough of power," said a Western diplomat.

Sheriff Defies Judge and Backs Marijuana Growers

William Claiborne in Los Angeles

IN MOST cities, a Superior Court judge's order to local law enforcement officials to shut down an illegal marijuana cultivators' club would seem to be enough to get the job done. But not necessarily so in freewheeling San Francisco.

Both the county sheriff and the district attorney in San Francisco are outspokenly in favor of legalized marijuana for medicinal use. The director of the health department has suggested having city health workers distribute the drug to patients who need it for relief of pain.

San Francisco's reputation as a municipal iconoclast and proving ground for unconventional ideas got a major boost last week when County Sheriff Michael Hennessey refused to padlock the controversial Cannabis Cultivators' Club as ordered by Superior Court Judge David Garcia.

"I feel that many people benefit from medical marijuana and that this organization provides a valuable service," Hennessey said. "I don't know if they did step over the line, but no official in San Francisco, including me, wants to put them out of business."

Hennessey, a Democrat who has been elected to the county's top law enforcement job five times, said the city attorney's office, which has sued the federal Drug Enforcement Administration to prevent it from punishing physicians who recommend marijuana for medicinal use, interpreted Garcia's order as giving him the option of declining to shut the club and turning that responsibility over to the state Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement. But Hennessey said he instead will attempt to negotiate a settlement with the court in which the cannabis club could remain open.

Even if the sheriff's deputies or state narcotics agents move against the club, prosecuting its operators would fall to District Attorney Terence Hallinan, who long has advocated decriminalizing marijuana and has said, "We're all together on wanting to make [medical marijuana] work in San Francisco."

The year-long legal battle over the use of medical marijuana, which California voters approved in a 1996 referendum, came to a head when Garcia ordered the immediate closure of the cannabis club, which was founded by oft-busted pot dealer Dennis Peron.

Garcia, basing his decision on an appellate court ruling last December, said the 1996 ballot initiative allows only patients and their immediate caregivers to cultivate and possess marijuana. The judge said the law does not allow clubs like Peron's to sell or give marijuana to other clubs or caregivers, as Peron admitted his outlet was doing.

Garcia's "nuisance abatement order" calls for either the San Francisco County Sheriff's Department or the state Bureau of Narcotics to close Peron's downtown emporium and seize its contents. But complicating the order is the fact that the club is also the headquarters for Peron's maverick campaign for the Republican nomination for governor — his opponent in the June 2 primary is Attorney General Dan Lungren, the frontrunner.

Lungren, a law-and-order conservative who has long opposed efforts to legalize marijuana, said if Hennessey fails to act against the club, he will.

Peron, whose club was closed by Lungren's narcotics agents for five months in 1996 before the statewide referendum allowed it to reopen, said about a dozen sufferers of AIDS and cancer are living in the cannabis club and a raid by state narcotics agents will only result in the spectacle of emaciated and terminally ill patients being forcibly removed from their beds.

"If they want to come and arrest the building, they can do that. They're just the same old spoiled sports who opposed the ballot initiative and want to defeat it with a technicality," Peron said.

Food Fight Inspired by The 'O' Word

OPINION
Ellen Goodman

HOW often does a grass-roots movement ask the government to regulate its own enterprise? When was the last time small operators rose up to bitterly complain that government rules and regulations weren't strict *enough?*

But this is the upside-down nature of a food fight that has erupted between the United States Department of Agriculture and the organic farming community.

Ever since last December when the USDA released the first-ever proposals for minimum standards for organic foods, a full-scale debate has been raging about the meaning of the "O" word. Now, an astonishing 101,000 farmers and chefs, and consumers and environmentalists have developed an appetite for protest. In the face of an April 30 deadline for comments, they have registered deep disapproval of the agency's taste.

These farmers were always wary of involving the USDA, an agency which, to put it gently, has been a bastion of conventional farming and a buddy of agribusiness. But with the help of Vermont's Sen. Patrick Leahy, the Organic Foods Production Act was passed in 1990 to determine minimum standards. Farmers, consumers, scientists and environmentalists spent four years working out an agreement on the definition of organic.

Then the USDA stepped in, to fulfill their worst fears. In the tradition of the "fox guarding the henhouse," the agency proposed to lower these standards.

The USDA rules would, for example, allow lettuce fertilized with sewage sludge, genetically engineered pigs and irradiated radicchio to carry the label "organic." They would allow a chicken that had never seen the light of day, let alone a free range, to carry an "organic" tag.

If the Department of Agriculture is surprised by the huge outrage, that in itself is not surprising. The department's bias toward conventional farming is long and deep. Organic farming is now a $4 billion business growing by 20 percent a year. But its success is taken as a rebuke to the factory-farming, supermarket-to-the-world agribusiness that is now the rule.

Indeed it is widely believed that the folks marketing sludge, promoting genetic engineering or irradiation got the USDA's ear because they want to piggyback onto the good name of "organic" to mute controversies.

We can debate the safety of genetic engineering till the cloned cows come home, but it fits no image of organic farming. This food fight is not just about safety of the product. It's about the process of farming.

The USDA has done little to promote organic farms. But if these proposals are put into law, organic will have lost any meaning. The "O" in the O-word will stand for Zero.

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Foreign Aid 'Props Up System of Abuse'

Stephen Buckley in Addis Ababa

TO SUPPORTERS, Assefa Maru was a charismatic trade unionist and human rights activist, an unrelenting advocate of freedom of association and individual rights.

To the Ethiopian government, he was a terrorist secretly scheming to sink Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's seven-year-old regime and the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.

Security forces killed Assefa last May. The government says he resisted arrest. Relatives, witnesses and human rights activists say he was shot in cold blood.

This incident, which drew international ire, was among the most publicized of thousands of human rights abuses — including arbitrary arrests, "disappearances," and the repression of civic organizations and political opposition — that the Meles regime is alleged to have committed since it took power in 1991.

The government has arrested thousands of critics and opponents. It has detained more journalists in the past three years than any other African government. Two years ago, the International Committee of the Red Cross estimated that 10,000 Ethiopians were in prison for political or national security reasons.

Opposition parties, human rights groups and major trade unions allege that the government has shackled them by shutting their offices and by arresting their supporters in the countryside, where 85 percent of the population lives.

Critics are especially alarmed that foreign governments shower Ethiopia annually with hundreds of millions of dollars in aid, despite mounting allegations of human rights violations. Donors have pledged more than $2.5 billion since 1996. This year Ethiopia will receive some $700 million from the World Bank, more than any other country on the continent. Ethiopia also will receive more U.S. aid in 1998 — roughly $83 million — than any other country in sub-Saharan Africa.

"How could the West give the aid?" said an Ethiopian journalist who has been arrested under Meles. "How could the West call Ethiopia a democracy? How could the West call Meles a new breed of leader?

Meles says his government does not terrorize critics and opponents. Journalists are arrested, he said in an interview, because they write stories that foment ethnic hatred or compromise national security, and opposition politicians are arrested when they embrace armed insurrection.

"We have about 60 political parties, but some people want to have it both ways" by belonging to a political party and by taking up arms, Meles said. "We have taken them to court."

"We have no policy of intimidating the opposition. I know what happens when peaceful, legal dissent is muzzled," the prime minister said, "I know what happens because I've been on the receiving side of that . . . If for no other reason than maintaining stability, we must allow dissent."

While saying that Ethiopia's seven-year journey in democracy has produced "a mixed bag," he added, "But I think we are trying very hard to establish democratic institutions."

Only the government's bitterest critics compare it to the repressive regime it toppled. From 1975 to 1991, Mengistu Haile Mariam imposed a Marxist-inspired "red terror" on Ethiopia marked by extrajudicial executions, imprisonment and torture of its opponents, economic collapse and widespread famine. The regime — known as the Dergue — fell and Mengistu fled into exile when a Meles-led rebel force overran the government army.

Since taking power, the new government has revived the economy of this East African nation of 60 million people, most of whom make about 25 cents a day. Ethiopia has enjoyed 5 to 7 percent economic growth rates since the early 1990s. Inflation has held at 4 to 5 percent. The government has privatized 190 state-run enterprises. Private investment has tripled since 1994, and 120 American investors now do business here.

On a continent that donor nations hope to wean from direct aid and to engage in increased trade, the economic transformation has won high praise. Yet even major donors — who also support Ethiopia in part because it has become a linchpin in the fight to neutralize neighboring Sudan — express concern over the young regime's human rights record.

"The control element clearly exists," a senior Western diplomat said. "They're doing this [enacting economic and political revisions], but with large doses of control intermixed. But I wouldn't go so far as to say they're trying to totally suppress dissent."

Beyene Petros, a prominent opposition politician, argues the regime allows just enough freedom to keep major donors quiet. "A functioning multi-party system is nonexistent," he said. "There are political parties registered, but if you closely examine that list, 95 percent of the 60 parties are affiliated with the [ruling party]. They will show you a list and say, 'What are you guys talking about?' "

Many opposition parties have been forced to shut regional offices. Their leaders say the government often denies them permits to hold rallies. Exorbitant fees preclude them from using government-owned media; Ethiopia's only private me[dia] outlet is a radio station owned by [the] ruling party. Opposition leaders [say] their phones are tapped.

Many opposition politicians ha[ve] fled abroad. Others have been [in] prison for much of Meles' rule. [S...] central committee members of o[ne] party, the All-Amhara Peopl[e's] Organization, are in detention.

"Not only humanitarian ass[is]tance, but [any] assistance given [to] the present government is wron[g]," said party vice president Keng[a]mach Bekele.

Yet diplomats say that their pu[b]lic criticism of the governme[nt] rarely helps. "My experience h[as] been that it has not accomplish[ed] anything," the senior Western dip[lo]mat said. "We think we're mo[re] effective in handling these thin[gs] privately."

The Longest Headache

Barbara Raskin

HOLDING OUT
By Anne O. Faulk
Simon & Schuster. 427pp. $23



ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW RUSSO

ANNE O. FAULK, a former Merrill Lynch account executive turned author, is about to make a financial killing in the book — rather than the bond — market. A commercially correct product like this doesn't appear very often. For a first-time novelist, Faulk does a bang-up job of updating the 2,500-year-old story of Lysistrata, heroine of Aristophanes's comedy of the same name, who organized the women of Athens to withhold sex from their men until the Peloponnesian Wars ended. A contemporary sex strike was a literary land mine waiting to happen, a bestseller begging to be born.

Faulk scores a slam-dunk with Holding Out. Although the prose is pedestrian, the dialogue undifferentiated and many (though not all) of the episodes predictable, you learn to like the heroine. Lauren Fontaine is an attractive 36-year-old Atlanta financial executive and the single mom of a teenage son. When the much-admired wife of the chief justice of the Supreme Court commits suicide (after years of physical abuse from her husband), the House of Representatives declines to impeach him because they fear a more liberal replacement will be appointed to the court. America's women are outraged and Lauren decides to go to Washington to participate in her first protest march.

What follows is as juicy as the latest Monica Lewinsky chronicle. Faulk pushes every hot-button issue of the moment. She doesn't miss a beat or a bet as her modern Lysistrata meets Clarence Thomas, O.J. Simpson, Ivan Boesky and Michael Milken, plus some Capitol Hillbillies, Beltway bandits and Washington socialites.

The night before leaving Atlanta to go to the march, Lauren meets the man of her dreams (an all-too-familiar sexy novelist) and during a midnight visit to a museum hears the story of Lysistrata. Armed with these new resources, Lauren arrives at the Georgetown mansion of her college chum Ali, who is preparing to host a strategy session for the leadership of the women's movement, which has grown stagnant. With businesslike efficiency, Faulk crowds her canvas with colorful figures representing various feminist political factions. It's pretty formulaic but still, somehow, fun. Lauren hesitantly suggests the Lysistrata strategy to the leadership and, after a certain amount of infighting, they elect Lauren as their spokeswoman.

The next day, before 2 million protesters, Lauren pitches her plan for a sex strike, and the idea takes off like a Canaveral launch — once again proving that sex is powerful and that there's nothing sexier than delayed gratification. Women sign holdout pledge cards, and Alcoholics Anonymous-type chips are awarded for abstinence rather than sobriety.

Suffering all the fallout of sudden fame, Lauren is targeted for character assassination by all the expected, as well as some unexpected, parties. Lauren endures press persecution, political prosecution, corporate retaliation, security threats, child-custody concerns. Flooded by talk show invitations — which are vetoed by her newly acquired bodyguard — she pleads: "C'mon, Moore . . . even Salman Rushdie did the Letterman show."

Amidst all this ruckus, Lauren walks us through a huge currency transaction necessitated by the unauthorized trading of one of her subordinates. It's fun watching a woman play hardball in the trading arena, even if it leads to trumped-up charges of security fraud and eventual imprisonment. Despite her hectic experiences, Lauren gradually resolves some personal issues such as being a man's woman rather than a woman's woman and doing the right thing despite extraordinary risks.

Of course, love and decency triumph in the end, because this is a well-made book constructed by a businesswoman who knows how to take care of business. The plot advances like the dancing ball of a sing-along commercial, and the author displays enough political smarts for me to echo what Lauren says about America's first sex strike: "Houston, we have liftoff."

Eliot Revisited

Steven Moore

THE ARCHIVIST
By Martha Cooley
Little, Brown. 328 pp. $22.95

I USED to know a fatuous publisher who once pontificated, "You know a book is in trouble when the author starts quoting Eliot." I didn't even bother to ask what he meant, knowing that many of our best contemporary novelists — Gaddis, Pynchon, Burroughs, Markson, Maso — have quoted T.S. Eliot's resonant, enigmatic poetry as regularly as earlier novelists quoted the Bible. Eliot is quoted throughout Martha Cooley's first novel, and in fact is regarded as a religious writer by the principal characters of The Archivist, who study his poetry to illuminate their own theological concerns.

It's risky to make the hero of your first novel a librarian, and a 65-year-old curator of manuscripts at that. Matthias Lane has been working in Princeton library since 1965, the year both his wife, Judith, and Eliot died. One of the collections he presides over is the letters that Emily Hale received from Eliot; she was his first love and a lifelong confidante who gave his letters to Princeton (in fact as well as in this fiction) with the proviso that they be sequestered until 2019. (Eliot was furious and broke off contact with her.) One day a graduate student named Roberta Spire asks Matt to show her the letters. He refuses, of course, but is curious enough about Roberta's motives to be drawn into a friendly relationship with this intense poet half his age.

Roberta is fascinated by religious conversion, both Eliot's to Anglicanism and her parents' from Judaism to Christianity. Eliot converted in the difficult years after he committed his first wife, Vivienne, to a sanatorium; he corresponded regularly with Hale during those years, and Roberta is convinced that the explanation for Eliot's mysterious conversion can be found in those letters. Her own parents converted after their terrifying experience in Europe during World War II; fleeing to the New World, they sought a new life and a new religion as a way of forgetting their past, an act of denial that now infuriates their daughter.

Matt shares Roberta's interest in both Eliot and conversion, because his dead wife, Judith, resembled Vivienne in some ways and because, as she deteriorated mentally, she converted from secular Judaism to Kabbalism, its mystical branch. Judith too was committed to a sanatorium, which paralyzed Matt in the same way Vivienne's commitment did Eliot. An obvious parallel quickly emerges. (Cooley provides all the relevant details, drawn largely from Lyndall Gordon's 1988 book Eliot's New Life, and integrates them smoothly into her narrative.)

Like Eliot's "Four Quartets," The Archivist is divided into four parts, each one dealing, as does Eliot's great sequence, with the ways the past impinges on the present. Part one sets out all that I've just summarized, and is narrated by Matt in circumspect prose. Part two consists of the journal Judith kept during her confinement, tracking her losing battle with her various demons. Part three returns to the novel's present (the mid-1980s) and Matt's narration of his recovery from Judith's death and his growing relationship with Roberta. The brief fourth part is Matt's terse account of his final encounter with the Hale-Eliot letters, an unthinkable act for an archivist.

It is rare and gratifying to read a novel about people who take literature seriously, who practically live and die by books. For Cooley's characters, poetry like Eliot's provides the most accurate and ennobling articulation of their various dilemmas, which explains Roberta's (and many scholars') desire to ransack a writer's letters for further illumination. It is also rare to see a serious literary work that grapples with theological concerns these days.

The Archivist is a memorable achievement.

How the Rich Got Richer

J. Bradford DeLong

THE WEALTH AND POVERTY OF NATIONS
Why Are Some So Rich and Others So Poor?
By David S. Landes
Norton. 650pp. $30

DAVID S. LANDES has studied the history of economic development for more than half a century. His Unbound Prometheus remains a must-read for serious students of the industrial revolution, and his other books are also critical points of reference for those who seek to understand the economic processes that made our modern world.

Now Landes turns to the grandest question of all: the causes of the divergent destinies of different economies. The title echoes Adam Smith, but Landes is interested in both the wealth and poverty of nations, as concerned with the roots of relative — and absolute — economic failure as he is with those of success.

He pulls no punches and scorns all fashions. Some readers will recall how columnists decried history standards that taught students about the African ruler Mansa Musa but not about Robert E. Lee; readers of Landes will find three pages on Mansa Musa and none on Lee. We are all multiculturalists now — but then serious historians have long been multiculturalist.

Nevertheless, Landes's economic history is a profoundly Eurocentric history. He argues that a history of the world from 500 to 1500 should be Islamocentric, for Islam's "explosion of passion and commitment . . . [was] the most important feature of Eurasian history." But a history oriented toward understanding the wealth and poverty of nations today must be Eurocentric. Europe's industrial revolution is the heart of the story of how some nations — largely those in northwestern Europe and their settler ex-colonies — have grown rich. Relative poverty elsewhere is the result of failure on the part of political, religious and mercantile elites to pass the test (rigged heavily against them) of maintaining or regaining independence from and assimilating the technologies of the people from Europe — merchants, priests, and thugs with guns — who came in boats, rarely with friendly intent.

Thus Landes wages intellectual war on all who deny that the history of the wealth and poverty of nations over the past millennium is the history of industrial production and sociological organization in Europe and the diffusion of the resulting technologies. He wins his battles, and not just because as author he can set up straw figures as his opponents. He wins because in the large (and usually in the small) he has stronger arguments than intellectual adversaries who believe, for instance, that Chinese technology was equal to British until 1800, or that equatorial climates are as well suited as mid-latitude climates to the kind of agriculture that can support an Industrial Revolution.

His book is readable, comprehensive and opinionated enough to make everyone angry at least once

Landes's emphasis rests mostly on cultural factors that gave European civilizations an edge over Chinese, Arabic, Indian or Indonesian civilizations. Advantages in the speed of technological advance made it very likely that within Europe the breakthrough to industrialization would take place first in Britain, and have made it damnably difficult since for people elsewhere to assimilate modern machine technologies and modes of social and economic organization.

If there is a single key to success — defined as relative wealth — in Landes's narrative, it is openness: a willingness to borrow whatever is useful from abroad, no matter what the price in terms of injured elite pride or harm to influential interests. Openness is also a willingness to trust your own eyes and the results of your own experiments, rather than rely primarily on old books or the pronouncements of powerful and established authorities.

If there is a second key, it lies in politics: a government strong enough to keep order, limited enough for individuals to be secure, and willing sometimes to sacrifice official splendor and martial glory to give merchants and manufacturers an easier time making money. Economic success requires a government that is, as people used to say, an executive committee of the bourgeoisie — a government responsive to and concerned for the well-being of a business class that has a strong conscious interest in rapid economic growth.

At the book's conclusion Landes becomes uncharacteristically diffident, claiming that "the one lesson that emerges is the need to keep trying. No miracles. No perfection. No millennium. No apocalypse. We must cultivate a skeptical faith, avoid dogma, listen and watch well . . ." Such a change of tone sells the book short, for he could have drawn many additional lessons. For example: Try to make sure that your government does not maintain power by massive redistributions of wealth. Hang your priests from the lampposts if they try to get in the way of assimilating industrial technologies or forms of social and political organization. Recognize that the task of a less productive economy is to imitate rather than innovate, for there will be ample time for innovation after catching up to the production standards of the industrial core.

Still, you cannot even begin to think about problems of economic development and convergence without knowing the story that Landes tells. His book is short enough to be readable, long enough to be comprehensive, analytical enough to teach lessons, opinionated enough to stimulate thought — and to make everyone angry at least once. I know of no better place to start thinking about the wealth and poverty of nations.

Mexico's Big Brother Tactics Exposed

The government has listened in to citizens' private lives for seven years, writes **Molly Moore** in Mexico City

JUST after 9 o'clock on a recent night, Sen. Layda Sansores Sanroman banged on the front door of a house in the center of the southern Mexican city of Campeche. What she discovered when the janitor opened the door unleashed a scandal that has ripped open the underbelly of Mexican politics.

A back room was crammed with electronic eavesdropping equipment. Another room contained files stuffed with thousands of pages of transcripts of telephone conversations of politicians, journalists and private citizens.

Intimate details of love affairs, corruption and extortion are damaging enough. But the raid on the government espionage center — complete with financial records and seven years of tapes and transcripts — has exposed extraordinary details of the government's bugging operations against its citizens, political foes and prominent business leaders.

"I was furious to discover my life on papers, documents, recordings and computer files," said Sansores, 52, a federal senator from the opposition left-of-center Party of the Democratic Revolution. "Seven years of my life were there, tracked in detail."

In recent weeks, more than a dozen other cases of government espionage have been uncovered across the country, ranging from hidden microphones and cameras found in the offices of the new government of Mexico City to interceptions of the telephone calls of a state governor.

The discoveries — and the willingness of the targets to go public with evidence — confirmed many Mexicans' long-held suspicion that their government has acted as an omnipresent Big Brother spying on its citizenry, its perceived enemies and frequently, on some of its own agencies and officials.

"Everything I say and do, I assume that I am being spied on," Guanajuato state Gov. Vicente Fox, of the right-of-center National Action Party and a declared candidate for Mexico's presidency in the 2000 elections, said in response to the recent discovery that his telephones had been bugged.

In a nation that is struggling to make the transition from a government controlled by a single political party for nearly 70 years to a multiparty democracy, increasing numbers of politicians and private citizens have begun to speak out against the eavesdropping, one of the tools that many critics argue has helped the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party maintain its grip on power.

"It is a horrible, filthy method of political control," said Mariclaire Acosta, president of the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights, who said she is a regular target of wiretaps. "It's a fundamental violation of the right to privacy."

Many citizens and human rights activists believe the explosion in kidnapping, drug trafficking and other crimes has been abetted by corrupt law enforcement officials with access to wiretaps.

As always, every government agency identified with the electronic surveillance operations — the federal attorney general and Interior Ministry, the military, the national security agency and a plethora of state institutions — has denied any knowledge of bugging activities.

In Campeche, the state on the Yucatan peninsula where Sen. Sansores found the eavesdropping equipment, officials declined requests for interviews. Gov. Jose Gonzalez Curi's spokesman said in a statement, "The governor of Campeche is not involved in any case of espionage" and labeled the accusations slanderous. Party officials have accused Sansores of manipulating the information to buttress her claims that the Institutional Revolutionary Party used fraud to defeat her in last year's gubernatorial election.

Tipped off by an anonymous note pressed into her hand during a campaign rally, Sansores said she spent several months looking for the spy center. On the night she rapped on the front door of the building, Sansores was accompanied by 300 supporters who encircled the house for the entire night to prevent workers from removing evidence.

Sansores and her aides unearthed records that showed state government checks were used to buy more than $1.2 million in surveillance equipment from Israel. They found certificates of commendation issued to two operators, one an employee of the Mexican national security agency, another a military intelligence specialist. They found a list of names of the main bugging victims. And they found thousands of pages of transcripts of telephone conversations and boxes of audiotapes dating to 1991.

After the raid, Sansores said, she was approached by the center's operational director. He said, "You were my obsession for seven years. Seven years listening to your voice starting at 7 a.m., recording you, transcribing your conversations."

Sansores said, "I didn't know if I should cry or laugh . . . the man right there in front of me knew everything about me and my family. The times I was angry, sad, happy, the family problems — everything."

The man, Valente Quintana Gonzalez, was one of three employees at the center who were arrested on wiretapping charges, according to a statement released by the federal attorney general's office. All have since been released on bail.

On the night of the raid, Sansores — whose aides videotaped the entire episode — could not persuade local or state authorities to investigate the spy center or make arrests. The federal attorney general's office has begun an investigation and declined requests to discuss the case.

Documents discovered in the Campeche espionage center indicate that there are 22 similar operations throughout the country, according to Sansores. Citizens' organizations in the state of Tabasco, acting on tips turned up by Sansores, have begun monitoring three buildings believed to be government espionage centers in Villahermosa, the state capital.

PoW's Story Is Reminder of a Brutal War

Doug Struck in Baghdad

FOR 16 years, Falah Hamid's life was confined to a few square feet, two thin blankets in the freezing winter and rations of half-cooked rice. He lived because he refused to submit to death in an Iranian prison.

"I said, 'I will not die in Iran. I will not die here. I will return to Iraq,'" Hamid, now 47, said in his family home here.

Hamid emerged from an Iranian prison last week in an extraordinary exchange of 5,584 prisoners, most of them Iraqis detained during the Iran-Iraq war. Their return evoked sharp memories here of the brutal war that saw an eight-year stream of taxis returning from the front with coffins tied to their roofs.

The war is estimated to have claimed 1 million victims from 1980 to 1988. It was fought with an extravagance of death: Draftees and young boys from both sides were sent charging without ammunition into enemy lines, forced into martyrdom in the name of country or religion.

Those casualties were a powerful anesthesia for mercy, a justification for keeping these prisoners for a decade after the war ended. The war was an inconclusive draw. Two years later, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein turned his guns toward Kuwait. In the international isolation that followed the Persian Gulf War, Iraq is seeking to improve relations with Iran.

Hamid shrugs. "I will follow my leadership, if that is their decision," said the man who was beaten with a pipe and as a result could not walk for two years of his confinement.

Of the 322 Iranian prisoners released, three were captured during the war and 319 during other conflicts, apparently most in the uprising after the Gulf War. The release of the prisoners has begun to bring the final chapter of the Iran-Iraq war to a close.

Two years after the war ended, some 70,000 prisoners were repatriated. But there are no figures on how many other prisoners are being held. Iraqi officials talk of as many as 10,000 more being released in the coming days, and have discouraged publicity about the returning prisoners until the process is complete. The International Committee of the Red Cross, which supervised the prisoner swap, has said only that it has concluded the current exchange.

As the prisoners return to Iraq, they find themselves in a perplexing new reality. Hamid said he knew nothing of the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, or of the Gulf War, or of the international sanctions that have made the bonus of 50,000 Iraqi dinar that he received upon his release unable to buy more than a tambourine band for a welcome home party.

"I do not know this place," he said of the Baghdad he saw on his return. During his imprisonment, Hamid was moved from one camp to another. Some years he spent in cells underground, some years on bare ground in tents. Always there was crowding, he said: "We would sleep with the next man's feet on my head." Always there were beatings: "It became the normal routine."

In the first year after his capture, he was able to send three letters to his family and receive two in return. One of those mentioned his mother and brothers, but not his father. "I felt in my heart he had died," said Hamid. Kifah, his younger brother, said their father died two years after Falah was imprisoned.

"He ate nothing. He had no appetite after his son was a prisoner," Kifah said. "I am certain he died because of this."

Falah Hamid said he stopped writing when he found pieces of his last letter ripped into shreds and scattered by the guards. He said he suffered from tuberculosis for two years.

He said the prisoners asked the guards why they were kept even after the war ended but were told only, "The war has not ended for you." Finally told he would be released, Hamid did not believe it until he saw the flag of the Red Cross on the Iran-Iraq border.

Taken to Baghdad, he was surprised he could remember his family's telephone number. "I heard on the phone the voice of my sister. She was only 12 when I left, and now she is 28. But I knew it was her voice," said Hamid, who is unmarried. When his brother came to take him home, "I did not recognize Kifah."

"Now I am a new baby, I am born again," Hamid said. "Come back in one year for my first birthday."

Naturally born to be wild

Paul Evans

"WE CAN rebuild a landscape where nature can flourish," wrote Bill Adams in Future Nature, a vision for conservation in 1996. "We can create a world of diversity and beauty, a land wild yet peopled. We have remarkable resources and opportunities. All we need is the imagination, and the determination, to make a place for the wild."

Can we? Should we? And where is a "place for the wild" going to go in the over-populated British Isles?

Those who respond "just about anywhere", are in the minority. To many people the notion of the wild — a state in nature that is beyond human governance — belongs in the landscape of national parks.

These areas of largely rugged uplands, often small compared with national parks in other parts of the world, give the impression of wilderness. But in fact these places have been shaped by human activity for centuries and any attempt to make them more wild by removing that activity — sheep farming and forestry, for example — is vigorously contested by farmers and land owners.

The idea of abandoning areas of so-called wild land to let nature take its course is anathema to both landowners and many conservationists who, weaned on modern management culture, find it impossible to let go of the comfort blanket of ecological intervention.

The "wild by design" idea was the subject of a recent seminar in Newcastle run by the Council for National Parks (CNP). The seminar skirted round the problem of "wild" and "design" being mutually exclusive — how can something be truly wild if it has been designed? Instead, the seminar promoted current thinking about the potential for creating wilder areas for wildlife and public enjoyment as well as the landscape and economic issues involved.


Fig. 1 Fig. 2
ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

Imagine large areas where human structures such as roads, pylons, buildings and sheep grazing are removed, and where natural woodland and wild creatures are free to develop, a state which some believe we have never known. Farmers mutter darkly about new Highland Clearances. Others are convinced that such re-wilding is not incompatible with the sensitive presence of people.

Encouraging wild lands to be more wild is not a new idea, but it's certainly one that is generating debate in a world increasingly characterised by intensive agricultural production and urbanisation. People need wild nature as an antidote. But this may also be part of the problem. When nature is seen as a resource and an amenity for people, those who call the shots determine what sort of nature is good for us.

A small, and socially exclusive group, is forwarding a narrow and exclusive view about what wild nature is, where it should be found and how it should be managed. The dream of wilder national parks is a bold one, but there is a danger of creating "wild" theme parks if they remain detached from the broader ecological and social context.

While all this is going on, nature is active in ways beyond the imaginings of even the most radical conservationists. Rain, snow and storms this month have brought the worst floods to parts of England for more than 150 years. This is a sure sign, if such was needed, that despite the best laid plans and good intentions of those who want to confine wild nature to designated ghettos in the deeper countryside, it will always visit us in ways we can't anticipate.

Chess Leonard Barden

GARRY KASPAROV will defend his world title in October at Seville against the survivor of a 10-game eliminator between Vladimir Kramnik and Alexei Shirov, which begins on May 22. This announcement came from the World Chess Council, an alliance between Kasparov and the sponsor Luis Rentero, who will foot the bill for Kramnik v Shirov, while the Spanish province of Andalusia finances the title contest.

Kasparov may be the best yet but he is also a serial killer of world chess bodies. The WCC follows the GMA, the PCA and an earlier Russian group tossed aside once they outlived their purpose. His new oligarchy suffered a birth trauma when India's Vishy Anand, Kramnik's intended opponent, withdrew saying he would not break his promise to the International Chess Federation (Fide) to abstain from rival championships after competing in Fide's Groningen knock-out.

The real problem for Kasparov is that his new world body has the allegiance of only three players, all ex-Soviets, in contrast to the GMA and PCA, which involved many grandmasters. Before Shirov's recent success at Linares, few would have considered him a front-line challenger.

The Kasparov group looks even more incestuous when we learn that Kramnik was his protégé. And Kramnik and Shirov used to be teammates at Empor Berlin until the German Bundesliga club lost its sponsor.

Back at Fide, its millionaire president, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, says his next $5 million world championship will be staged in Las Vegas late this year, rather than next. If so, Karpov's tenure is approaching its sell-by date, for he will compete with the GM hoi polloi rather than be allowed a special challenge match. Few expect him to keep his title.

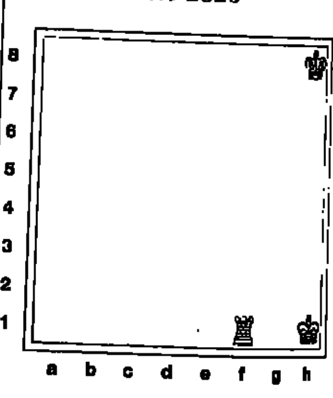
Cue Michael Adams: the 26-year-old Cornishman has just reached a 2700 rating, the first Briton to do so. Fide's March rankings put him at world number 10, but those ahead include the WCC three and the retired Gata Kamsky. Adams is the top Western-born player.

Adams v Karpov, ideally a 12-16 game title match or at least a 6-8 non-title bout, would compete with Kasparov v Shirnik more credibly than Karpov v Timman did with Kasparov v Short in 1993. And the Fide delegates might really like the concept if it was scheduled to start in October. Adams is still improving and would have serious chances to win, much more so than Short in 1993. And the match would be a shot in the arm for British chess.

It won't happen, of course. Ray Keene, who promoted the 1986 and 1993 title matches in London, is now into mind games rather than chess. The British Chess Federation is more interested in team events. And it is doubtful if there is any UK firm ready to put up the money.

Nevertheless Western challengers have always been publicity-friendly, while Adams, who has kept touch with his chess roots in weekenders and club matches, is a fine ambassador for Cool Britannia. The idea is logical, and its time will come.

No 2520



A king-rook puzzle where White (to play) can only move his rook to deliver checkmate. How many moves does it take with best play on both sides?

No 2519: 1-9 Kd8-e8-f7-g6-f5-e5-d6-c6xb5; 10-20 Kc6-d6-e5-f5-g4-f3-e2-d1xc2-b1xa2; 21 Kb1; 22-23 a2-a1N; 24 Ka2 Nc3 mate.

Quick crossword no. 415

Across

1 Hereditary property (10)
7 Decay from disuse (7)
8 Throttle — garrotte (5)
10 Inflated raft (4)
11 Tree with large pinkish flowers (8)
13 Say again (6)
15 Stiffening agent (6)
17 Terrier from Yorkshire (8)
18 Egg-shaped (4)
21 Artist's stand (5)
22 Numbness in a joint (4,3)
23 Small round pesticide (4,6)

Down

1 Girl's name — gemstone (5)
2 Mature (4)
3 Period of greatest success (6)
4 Madness (8)
5 One that races over the sticks (7)
6 Not off the peg? (6-4)
9 Study of handwriting (10)
12 Job requiring strenuous effort (4,4)
14 Sunshade (7)
16 Slimy muck (6)
19 Personal manservant (5)
20 Alternative to custody (4)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

"HONEY," said Ronald Reagan on a memorable occasion, "I forgot to duck." Bill Clinton might be saying something similar to Hillary soon — but for a different reason.

Bridge players have long been aware of the regularity with which one should duck — to prevent the opponents from being able to set up a long suit, to correct the loser count for a squeeze, and so on. But there are one or two more advanced positions. See whether you can do better than the American presidents on the two deals below:

North
♠ K 6 4
♥ K Q J
♦ A 3
♣ K 7 6 3 2

West
♠ J 10 8 2
♥ 8 4
♦ J 8 5 2
♣ Q J 9

East
♠ A Q 9
♥ 6 5
♦ K Q 10 9 7 6
♣ 10 4

South
♠ 7 5 3
♥ A 10 9 7 3 2
♦ 4
♣ A 8 5

This has been the bidding:

South	West	North	East
			1♦
1♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

West leads the two of diamonds. What is your plan? If you make the natural-looking play of winning with dummy's ace of diamonds, you'll regret it. You can draw trumps and hope to duck a club to East — but the defenders will thwart that plan, and when West takes his club trick, a spade through dummy's king will be the end. But try ducking at trick one. Later, you can discard a club on the ace of diamonds and set up the clubs without allowing West into the lead!

If that was duck soup for you, try this more difficult problem.

You play in six hearts on the following deal — yes, seven no trumps would have been a better contract, but for once your bidding wasn't perfect. At bridge, though, it's vital to concentrate on the task in hand without worrying about what might have been! West leads the king of clubs — over to you:

North
♠ A K 9 4 3
♥ 6 2
♦ K Q J 6 5
♣ A

West
♠ Q 10 5 2
♥ 3
♦ 10 8 4 2
♣ K Q 10 3

East
♠ J 8 7
♥ 10 9 8 7 5
♦ 9 7
♣ 7 5 4

South
♠ 6
♥ A K Q J 4
♦ A 3
♣ J 9 8 6 2

If you play on straightforward lines, winning the club lead and drawing four rounds of trumps before playing on diamonds, East will ruff the third round of diamonds and the defenders will cash a couple of club tricks to put you two down. Even with all four hands on view, the solution is not easy to see — but what you have to do is win the opening lead and immediately duck a heart! Now, if the defenders play a second round of clubs, you can ruff in dummy, cross to the ace of diamonds, and draw the rest of the trumps in peace.

Letter from Somalia J Southgate Burnett

Suffer little children

THE militia guards manning the many barricades on my daily route between Kismayo town and the seaport have a good idea of my schedule. At the approach of the Land Rover emblazoned with the blue United Nations logo they return my thumbs-up or even shout *"Diep Maleh!"* — No Problem!, waving us through with cheerful smiles.

The last barricade is formidable: razor wire, steel girders and a scattering of heavy artillery casings block the road. It's in a beautiful location, with the Indian Ocean on one side and the bay on the other.

One evening this roadblock appeared to be unmanned. My young khat-chewing driver, Arun, honked impatiently and I sensed my guards, tension. Something was wrong.

I spied a movement in the shadows of the open portal of the cement blockhouse. A boy, no more than 10 years old strutted out, gripping a Kalashnikov. The gun was almost as big as him. He wore a full-length brown smock, torn at the shoulder. The rip exposed his brown baby skin.

With a charming attempt to snarl and a manful squeak, the boy ordered us out of the car.

My guards and Arun looked at one another and laughed.

The boy's black eyes flashed with the fury of a child who wasn't getting his way. He was *not* going to be humiliated. And he had a gun.

He walked to the open driver's window and, without a word, stuck his gun in Arun's face, the barrel within an inch of his cheek.

Arun slowly reached for the door handle. The boy realised he was vulnerable and backed away. He had been trained.

He rammed back the cocking spring and levelled his rifle at Arun. Arun, furious, grabbed his own gun off the passenger seat and kicked open the door. He too cocked his battered Kalashnikov.

With a measured calm that underscored the danger, Arun told the boy to stop horsing around and open the bloody gate. He was still not quite sure whether to take this child seriously.

The boy said nothing but glared at Arun with hatred. His finger had not left the trigger; the lever on the side of the AK-47 was on automatic; the safety catch was off.

My guards were no longer laughing. This armed gamin was as dangerous as any adult. In fact, probably more so — the boy didn't yet know what fear or death were.

Here in Somalia, after seven years of civil war and anarchy, death has become commonplace and of little consequence. The things that were important to the child were his pride and the power the gun gave him. At his age, there can be little distinction between a fantasy game and real life, between pretending to die and really dying. And because civil war and instant killing are all he has known since he was born, was he not doing something quite natural?

An audience was gathering on the other side of the barrier — teenagers and older men who had seen what guns can do. The elders, some on canes, grinning toothless smiles, keenly watched the youngster's moves. The boy knew it and the attention seemed to strengthen his resolve. It didn't look like he was going to back down.

I was scared and I could sense the uncertainty and fear in my guards. Fingers on triggers, they slowly moved their guns toward the silent crowd. I imagined their thoughts: there's probably going to be a shooting here, and it's a toss-up who is going to get this child's first round. Unless he goes for the foreign aid worker, Arun appeared to be the candidate.

There were some angry shouts from the side. The little boy frowned in response to the voices. An old man in a wraparound cloth and a woven Muslim cap raised his cane and barked at the boy. The child momentarily wavered, then stiffened. He was not going to back down. This was *his* roadblock.

The old man muttered to himself, hobbled out to the proud little sentry, grabbed him by the ear and hauled him away home.

Solar wind blows away theories

Robin McKie

ON A scale of scientific importance, Dr Henrik Svensmark and Dr Eigil Friis-Christensen's research on cosmic rays and cloud formation may one day rank as a world leader.

Yet its origins were obscure and its initial impact negligible. Painstakingly assembled from weather satellite data and other astronomical observations, the two Danish meteorologists' report was buried in a few pages of the Journal Of Atmospheric And Solar-Terrestrial Physics last year. It made little impact at the time, but slowly the paper has acquired a cult status among physicists. And it may yet prove to be a scientific milestone.

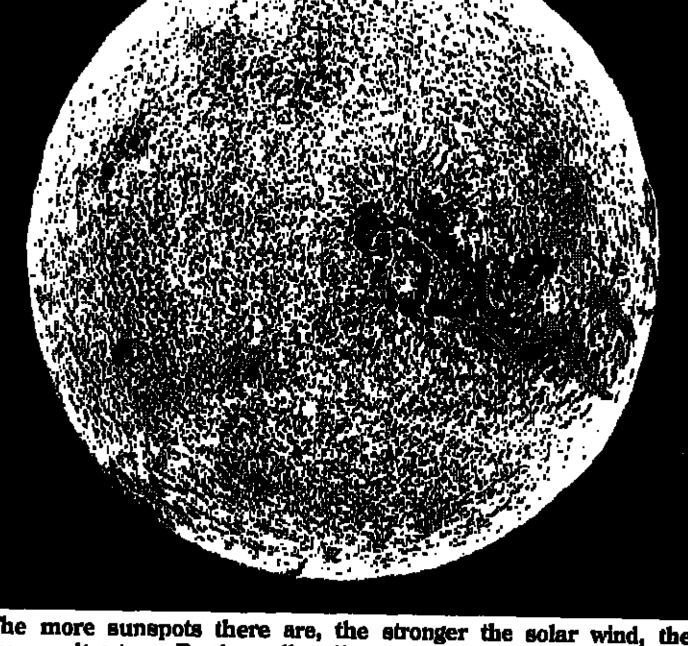
What Svensmark and Friis-Christensen discovered was simple: over the past 15 years they saw an exact correlation between levels of cosmic rays hitting Earth and the proportion of the world's skies obscured by clouds. The effect may not seem profound: a typical 20 per cent drop in cosmic ray levels reduces cloud cover from 68 to 65 per cent. Nevertheless the impact for our planet is considerable.

"Clouds have a profound effect on Earth's radiation budget," says Dr Jasper Kirkby of Cern, the international centre for particle physics research at Geneva. "The more cloud cover there is, the cooler will be the climate. Fewer clouds, and the planet will warm up."

And our planet is warming up. Over the past 100 years global temperatures have risen by about half of one degree Celsius. It had been assumed that this was the result of a steady rise in industrial activity — more and more factories, cars and homes spewing out carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, trapping the sun's heat and warming the atmosphere.

But there are inconsistencies in this simple picture. For example, global temperatures fell slightly between 1945 and 1970, a fact that cannot be explained by the steadily rising emissions over that period.

Some scientists have continued to argue that other factors must be involved. The importance of the work by Svensmark and Friis-Christensen is that they have provided these doubters with a convincing alternative candidate — cosmic rays.


The more sunspots there are, the stronger the solar wind, the warmer it gets on Earth — allegedly PHOTOGRAPH: SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

Our planet is bathed in cosmic rays, a heavenly rain of sub-atomic particles that pour down upon us from deepest space. Researchers believe that the particles were probably spewed into the cosmos by exploding supernovae.

Cosmic rays trigger a cascade of other particles when they strike atoms in the upper atmosphere, creating a background of natural radiation on Earth. This radiation would not be expected to fluctuate — were it not for the sun. The sun pours out gusts of its own sub-atomic particles. We call this the solar wind. It protects Earth from cosmic rays, sweeping them away from our planet.

In other words, when the solar wind is intense, fewer cosmic rays hit Earth, cloud cover is reduced and temperatures rise. And there is compelling evidence to support this idea, because there is an easy way to tell when the solar wind is strong. Just count sunspots. The more there are, the stronger the solar wind.

Claims of a link between sunspots and the weather are not new, of course. The great astronomer William Herschel noticed that the price of wheat in 18th century England was lower when there were many sunspots and the weather was warm. In the second half of the 17th century, when sunspots almost disappeared, the Earth went through a miniature ice age.

Crucially, scientists have discovered that sunspot activity has been changing radically over the past century. The solar winds have become stronger and stronger.

The only link that has yet to be established is the mechanism by which cosmic rays influence cloud formation. This is why Kirkby and Dr Frank Close, another British physicist, have proposed building a cloud detector at Cern.

This machine would recreate Earth's atmosphere. A chamber containing the gases, water vapour and aerosol particles found in our atmosphere would be battered with sub-atomic particles from one of Cern's accelerators to reveal the exact mechanism that links sunspot activity with atmospheric heating.

In this way, the expertise of the world's particle physicists would be brought to bear on a critical environmental issue.

If they succeed in establishing a link, a major environmental shibboleth — that mankind is responsible for the rise in global temperatures — will be destroyed, with profound political implications. Fears that continued industrial development, urgently sought by the developing world, might have devastating consequences could then be discounted, although other valid concerns about acid rain and ozone depletion would remain. — *The Observer*

Notes and Queries Joseph Harker

IN WESTERN music, the fundamental major key, the one with no sharps or flats in it, is called "C". Why not "A"?

THE "fundamental major key", from a keyboard player's perspective, did not get there first. The white notes of the piano are those of the medieval scale, which had to be deduced theoretically, in the absence of any keyboard instrument; and medieval writers decided, for the same obvious reasons that led to the question, to call their bottom note A. The arrangement of tones and semitones in that system, known as the "greater perfect system", suited the ranges of medieval chants, which were categorised not by key but by mode: the dorian, phrygian, lydian and mixolydian modes. All these modes use the same ("white") notes, but the chants arrange them differently. It was only in the 16th century that what we now call C major was granted any kind of recognition as the Ionian mode. — *(Dr) Fiona McAlpine, School of Music, Auckland university, New Zealand*

IS THERE any country where the rich are getting poorer and the poor are getting richer?

UTOPIALAND. — *Sebastián Pérez, Santiago, Chile*

HAS anyone ever seriously researched time travel?

A J W DUNNE'S An Experiment With Time (1927) caused a sensation when first published. It proposed a concept of time in which time travel seemed possible. Max Planck could not fault Dunne's maths but said his premises were incapable of proof and so were unscientific. Reverse Time Travel (1995), by the scientist B Chapman, explores the subject in depth and, while not ruling out time travel, makes it pretty unattractive. — *Peter Sharp, Warkworth, New Zealand*

WHO gave the world's first benefit concert and what was it in aid of?

JOSHUA and his trumpets at Jericho. The beneficiaries were Rahab the harlot and her family. — *Ted Webber, Cairns, Queensland, Australia*

AN EARLY example took place on July 2, 1944 in Los Angeles, in aid of the defence costs of young *Chicanos* who had been arrested in what came to be known as the Zoot Suit Riots. On the bill were saxophonists Jack McVea and Illinois Jacquet, trombonist J J Johnson, pianist Nat "King" Cole (under the pseudonym of Slim Nadine), guitarist Paul Leslie (aka Les Paul), bassist Johnny Miller and drummer Lee Young. — *Mitch Mitchell, London*

WHAT is it that makes everyone find pleasure in popping the bubbles on bubble wrap?

WHAT else is there after acne? — *Richard ffrench-Constant, Madison, Wisconsin, USA*

THE pleasure comes from committing a violent and destructive act without fear of social punishment. — *Richard Treseder, Oakland, California, USA*

THE behaviour may not be acquired: I recently observed my six-year-old daughter hoarding bubble wrap. I think she instinctively knew what to do with it. After a very short period of examining the stuff she proceeded to pop the bubbles. The phenomenon is widespread. An informative website exploring popping behaviour is at http://fathom.org/opalcat/bubblewrap.dcl — *Olivier Fuldauer, Calgary, Alberta, Canada*

Any answers?

WHAT is the history behind the handicapping of racehorses? The human athlete after winning a few prized races isn't lumbered with weights around their person. — *Pat Porteous, Nutbourne, West Sussex*

WHAT is particularly daft about a brush? — *Gerard Mackay, Nesscliffe, Shropshire*

WHY have I started to grey at my temples rather than anywhere else on my head? — *Philippa Collin, Amsterdam, Netherlands*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
April 26 1998

Taking a high interest in savings

In a two-page special report, **Ian Wylie** answers key questions on offshore funds for expatriate investors

EXPATRIATE investors often feel themselves at a disadvantage to savers back in Britain who have a wealth of financial information at their fingertips. But when it comes to investment strategy, expatriates have a lot more flexibility than their UK counterparts, and through offshore investment funds can access every conceivable market and thousands of companies as well as the world's available currencies and commodities.

Whether you are a novice or an experienced investor, the foundation of any portfolio should be a bank deposit or high interest cheque account in your base currency. But after that, most advisers recommend that your first investment proper should go into a collective fund.

What is collective investment?
Collective investment funds offer people with limited time, limited investment skills or modest means instant access to investment returns which would otherwise be available only to more experienced investors wealthy enough to buy their own professional advice. Offshore funds offer cost-effective means for smaller investors to gain exposure to equities. You can expect the same level of service and attention whether your savings total £100 or £10,000 because your money is pooled with that of thousands of other savers and managed by professional fund managers.

The fund managers will handle most of the paperwork for you and you will receive regular reports on how your money is being invested. Performance statistics will tell you how well the fund has done and which shares and securities the fund manager has been investing in.

By pooling your money with others in a collective fund, you are significantly reducing the risk of losing it. Equity investment is riskier than putting your money in an offshore deposit account, but through a collective fund the risk is spread across a broad range of underlying investments allowing expats to dabble in markets or sectors which would be too high-risk to buy into directly.

But the flexibility of offshore funds means you don't need to tie your money to one savings project or another. Unlike insurance-based investments, you are free to use your savings for whatever purpose you see fit. This flexibility is particularly useful if your personal circumstances change, requiring money to be channelled from one area of your finances to another.

Before committing your money to anything, you should work out your investment objective — it may be to fund future commitments such as a business, property purchase, school fees or retirement. Once you have identified your objective, ask yourself what you want your investments to achieve, in what time-scale and within what constraints. As with any form of equity investment, investors should give offshore funds at least five years to perform.

Why offshore funds?
Because offshore funds are based in tax havens, the fund itself has no liability to either income or capital gains tax, ensuring that the investment grows in a totally tax-free environment. Other tax advantages will depend on which fund you choose. Distributor funds pay out most of the income earned on investments each year, for which you may be liable for tax in your current country of residence. But with a roll-up fund, the income from the investment is rolled up tax-free within the fund rather than being paid out. There is no tax to pay until you cash in all or part of your holding, but any money you make is then liable to tax. However, roll-up funds can be useful for tax deferral particularly if you are planning to move to a country with a more relaxed tax regime.

How do offshore funds differ?
Offshore funds are structured in various different ways as umbrella funds, unit trusts, "OEICs", "Ucits" and mutual funds. But they can also be divided up again into another two categories — open-ended and closed-end funds. An open-ended fund, such as a unit trust, is bought and sold directly between the investor and the fund management group. The fund's price is determined by the number of buyers and sellers, and reflects the actual value of assets held in the fund. A closed-end fund, such as an investment trust, is structured in the same way as a company, and its shares are bought and sold on the world's stock markets in the same manner as other shareholdings. As a result market sentiment can affect the share price.

In Britain, OEICs (Open-Ended Investment Companies) are seen as the future of collective investment since they are regarded as more flexible and easier to understand

continued on page 25

Ten questions to ask offshore fund managers

- Is the fund approved by the Financial Services Authority and what are the compensation arrangements?
- What is the fund's track record over 1, 3, 5 and 10 years?
- How often has the fund achieved top quartile performance in its sector?
- How volatile has the fund's performance been?
- How experienced and stable is your team of fund managers?
- What is the investment [illegible] of the fund?
- What are fund's underlying [illegible]
- Does the fund have a regular savings scheme?
- What are the fund charges [illegible] are they [illegible]
- What can I expect in the way of performance updates [illegible]

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
April 26 1998

Top offshore funds over five years

Returns on an initial investment of £100

	Value (£)	Fund size ($)	Telephone No.
1. Invesco European Warrant	1,382.79	70.89	(+44) 1534-514 000
2. Hansard European Warrant	1,162.44	[illegible]	(+44) 1624-688 000
3. Quota	946.34	1,420.01	(+44) 171-626 2555
4. GT Asian Warr&Derivs B	500.80	20.71	(+44) 171-710 4567
5. GT Asian Warr&Derivs A	486.55	20.71	(+44) 171-710 4567
6. Patrimonia New Fund Equity	440.82	[illegible]	[illegible]
7. Cambrian Fund	422.93	[illegible]	[illegible]
8. Putnam Emerging Info Science	305.99	[illegible]	[illegible]
9. Fidelity Fds Nordic	291.38	[illegible]	[illegible]
10. Brazvest	253.26	[illegible]	[illegible]

Source: Standard & Poor's Micropal

Continued from page 24
than either unit trusts or investment trusts. There is just one price for buyers and sellers of OEICs. The fund manager's dealing charges are shown separately as is any commission payable to the investor's financial adviser. Like investment trusts, OEICs are based on a company structure. However, OEICs are similar to unit trusts in that their share price reflects the real value of the assets held rather than an arbitrary price determined by demand for the shares.

In terms of regulation, expatriate investors should also appreciate the difference between a Ucits fund and non-Ucits fund. Ucits (Undertakings for Collective Investments in Transferable Securities) funds may invest only in transferable securities. Non-Ucits can invest in other assets such as commodities, money market instruments and property. Ucits are deemed less risky instruments of investment than non-Ucits and the manner in which they may be marketed reflects that assumption. Non-Ucits have to be more rigorously approved by the regulatory authorities of each country before they may be marketed to private investors.

Just as a UK unit trust does, a recognised offshore fund has to be protected by a compensation scheme. The UK's offshore islands, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man are home to many of theses funds and have rules and a compensation scheme comparable to mainland Britain's.

How much do I need to invest?
Most investment advisers say investors need at least £100,000 spare to even think about indulging in individual equities, but you need no more than £20 a month to begin investing in some offshore funds. Investing through a regular savings plan can also help to iron out the effect of stock market fluctuations thanks to something known as "pound cost averaging". By regularly investing small amounts, you can protect yourself from putting in a lump sum just as the market takes a dive.

How much do offshore funds cost?
Offshore fund costs differ from onshore charges and are not always easily identifiable in the literature. Possible costs include initial charges, annual management, administration, custodian, trustee and audit fees, switching, currency conversion, reinvestment charges and redemption. While offshore funds usually state the same management charges of between 1 per cent and 1.5 per cent per annum as their onshore counterparts, the costs may exceeds this. Research published recently by statisticians Fitzrovia International showed that, while the average annual charge advertised by offshore and onshore funds is 1.31 per cent, the true level of average deductions offshore is 1.[illegible] per cent compared with an average of 1.53 per cent onshore.

Jonathan Overland, chairman of Newton Fund Managers on the Channel Islands, advises investors to haggle on charges, particularly initial charges. Some fund managers charge as much as 5 or 6 per cent upfront, but Mr Overland says intense competition is encouraging many to become more flexible in considering discounts.

How do I choose?
The proof of a good fund management house is in the performance of the funds it manages and, while past performance is no guarantee of future returns, investors should examine carefully the track record of funds over 1, 3, 5 and 10 years.

A management group with a wide range of good funds will also provide you with more room for manoeuvre. There will be times, for example, when you may wish to shift the weighting of your portfolio perhaps into an emerging market or moving from a growth fund to an income fund.

Newton's Jonathan Overland, who is also publicity officer for the Jersey Fund Managers Association, encourages investors to think ahead when mapping out their portfolio. "If you think you will end up back in the UK, most of your investments should be in UK sterling to minimise the effects of currency fluctuation," he says. "If you want diversification, put no more than 20 per cent in a specific country or region fund. Go for open-ended funds, preferably FSA-approved funds and avoid anything with which mentions hedging, gearing or derivatives."

How can I keep in touch?
Regardless of where you are in the world, keeping track of your funds' performance shouldn't be too difficult. Your fund manager should send you quarterly updates, while UK-based publications such as Offshore Financial Review and the International regularly publish offshore fund statistics provided by Micropal, comparative tables and advice.

If you are hooked up to the Internet, there are various websites which can help you keep in touch such as Interactive Investor at http://www. iii.co.uk/ which has offshore investment pages at http://www.offshore. net/, or the Financial Times website at http://www.ft.com/

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New Zealand universities' drive to attract foreign students is being undermined by the Asian downturn, writes **David Cohen**

Kiwi success bears little fruit

ECONOMIC turmoil over the past eight months in South-east Asia has for the moment pulled down the curtain on a decade of increasingly lucrative foreign student enrolments at New Zealand's universities. The same trend is being experienced in campuses in Australia.

While most New Zealand institutions will not have a full breakdown on their 1998 enrolment figures for some weeks, education officials in Wellington are in no doubt that the currency woes of Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand will be reflected in their foreign exchange earnings for 1998.

Of the 4,014 foreign students enrolled last year at campuses across New Zealand, more than three-quarters came from Asia, and 2,486 of those hailed from the four countries that have suffered the worst of the economic mayhem. Last year, the tuition fees these students paid added more than $30 million to the country's university budgets, and perhaps twice as much again to the New Zealand economy by way of money spent on living expenses.

In Australia, the number of foreign students expected to enrol this year had been more than 60,000, most of them Asians. One recent study suggested that they could have added more than $250 million to the local economy.

To some extent, the universities — like the Southeast Asian economies they have taken to serving — have become victims of their own success. The past decade has seen foreign student numbers grow by 30 per cent, as Australasian institutions have rushed to fill the demand coming from Asia for English-language education at élite institutions abroad. The lion's share of foreign student enrolments have come from Malaysia. At the University of Auckland, for instance, roughly a quarter of last year's 892-strong foreign student body was Malaysian.

Many of the Malaysian students have been sponsored by their government, which pays all of their living expenses as well as tuition fees. While Malaysia will continue to support those sponsored students who are already studying toward a degree, the country's embassy in Wellington reports that the number of newly sponsored students for 1998 is down by more than 90 per cent.

"The government will not be sending as many students as it has in the past," says Nik Mustara, an education attaché. Because of the success of an educational practice known as "twinning" — where private institutions train students and then send them overseas, usually to Britain or the United States, to complete a degree — Mr Mustara predicts that the numbers of government sponsorships may continue to diminish even after Malaysia regains its economic health.

"Even now there's less of a need for students to be sponsored abroad than in the past," she says. Most Asian students, including Malaysians, receive financial aid from their families, however, leading an institution such as the University of Auckland to remain confident that most will return to study in the coming year.

"Our enrolments appear to be steady right now," says Lesley Cavanagh, manager of the International Students Office at Auckland. "I think in part that's because higher education is such a big commitment for families — like buying a house — and people don't just pull out of these things all of a sudden." She suggests that New Zealand's relatively soft currency — the New Zealand dollar currently trades at only 35 cents to the British pound — could yet prove a windfall for local institutions competing for Asian students against what it sees as being its transatlantic rivals.

But British study visas, unlike those granted by the governments of New Zealand and Australia, give many long-term overseas students the right to work, thus enabling them to meet their own financial responsibilities. New Zealand's total restriction on students seeking [work] has already cost the country sig[nifi]cant numbers of Asian students, according to a recent survey. Nor [are] there plans to ease the restriction according to either the office of the education minister, Wyatt Creech, or New Zealand's immigration service. The Australian federal government has also indicated that it does not intend to alter the status quo.

However, there were some signs earlier this month that the exchange rates of Australia and New Zealand were yielding some Asian dividends for universities: against international trends, student numbers from Japan have shown a slight increase in 1998.

As the new semester begins in New Zealand, it has fallen to the country's seven universities — in a pattern repeated across the Tasman Sea — to find their own ways of easing the burden of other Southeast Asian students.

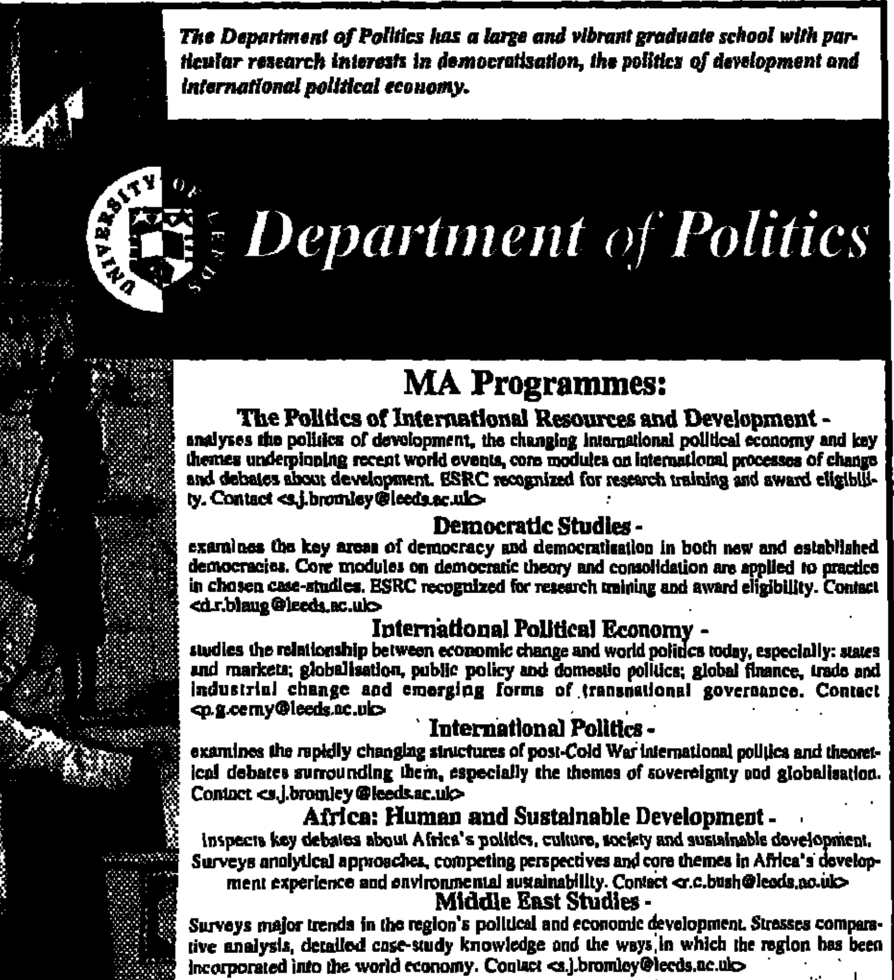
At Auckland, Otago, Waikato, Massey and Victoria, for example, students from Asia's battered economies may pay their living, tuition and accommodation fees in instalments instead of having to pay for the full year in advance.

While the range of options indicate the seriousness of the situation, it also reflects a belief on the part of Antipodean institutions that they are in for the long haul when it comes to competing with Britain for Asian students.

"From our point of view, the crises are temporary," says Lesley Cavanagh. "We do not wish to be seen in any way to be deserting students."



Will income from Asia dry up in the wake of the crash? PHOTO: PETER PARKS



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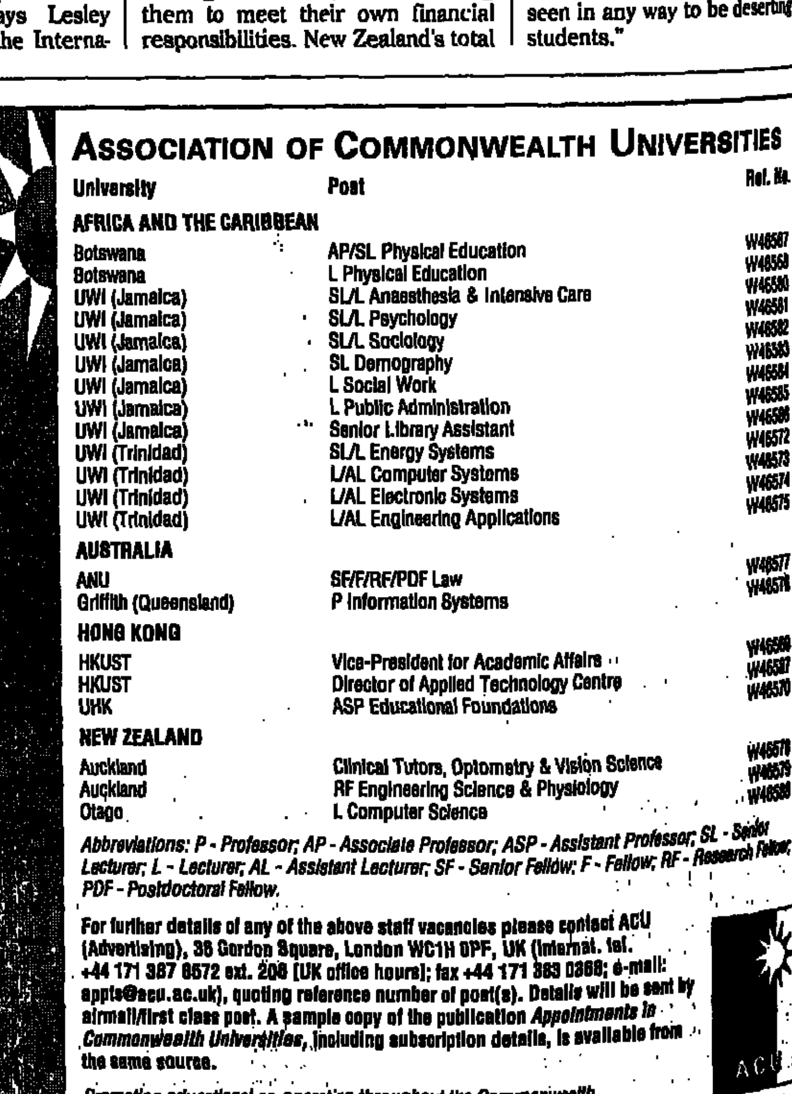
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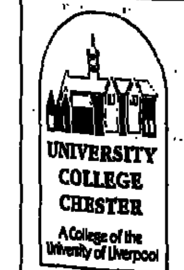
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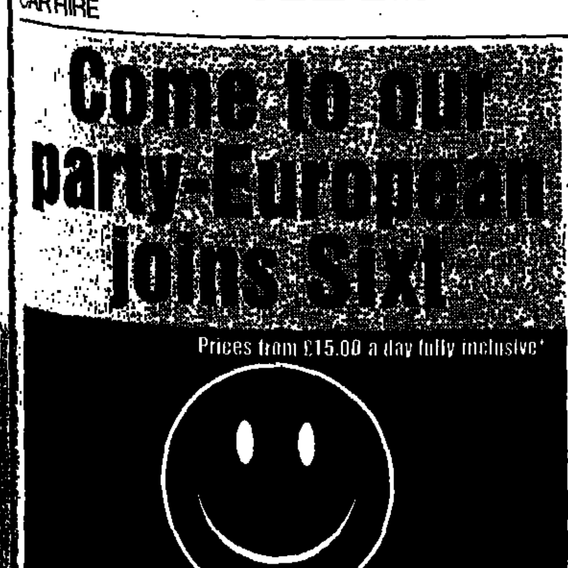
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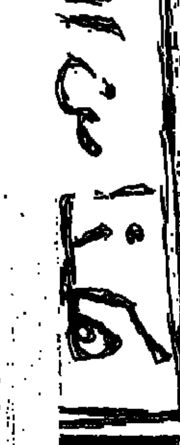
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Ruler of the chasm of darkness

Pol Pot

POL POT, leader of the Khmer Rouge, was one of the most reviled figures of the 20th century. In his four years as prime minister of Democratic Kampuchea, he attempted to remake an impoverished southeast Asian nation into a model of radical Maoism. His paranoia and brutality sent it into a chasm of darkness in which as many as 2 million people died. Pol Pot's enduring legacy is the thousands of mass graves that litter Cambodia, but he was chillingly unrepentant up to his death at the age of 73, saying recently that his "conscience was clear".

Scholars will long debate what drove a man described by those who knew him as gentle and unassuming to create a system under which family life was erased, children became torturers, and even loyal followers of the regime were bludgeoned to death in their thousands.

Pol Pot came to power in April 1975 and set about creating what the Khmer Rouge saw as a rural Utopia without money or private property. The cities were emptied and Cambodia's history began again at Year Zero.

There are few clues in his childhood to explain the violence he unleashed in later life. His father was a moderately wealthy farmer and his mother had connections at the royal court in Phnom Penh. At the age of six he was sent to the city for his education and later attended a boarding school for bright students. In 1948 he was among the first students sent on government scholarships to attend university in France.

His political ideas began to form in Paris, where he aimlessly studied radio engineering, failing to get a degree but becoming drawn to the optimistic vision of communism then circulating. In an interview in October 1997 Pol Pot said that in Paris he began reading about the French revolution, spending his scholarship money on second-hand books and copies of the French Communist party newspaper L'Humanité.

Opposition to French rule in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos was centred in the Indochina Communist party, which attracted many students at the time. With communist victories in China and across Eastern Europe, Marxism seemed the way to liberate Cambodia from the French. Pol Pot began to attend study sessions organised by the French Communist party. Another person who attended the meetings would later describe him as "the most intelligent, the most convinced, the most intransigent. It was he who animated the debates and most impressed the newcomers".

He returned to Cambodia in 1953, just before the country won its independence under King Sihanouk, who abdicated to take up a position as head of government. It was at this time that his revolutionary fervour developed, he later said. Shocked on his return by the poverty of his relatives, he was driven to political action.

In 1956 he began teaching at a private college where, according to his biographer David Chandler, he was remembered for his mild, affable manner and his knowledge of French literature. He was already leading a clandestine life in the Indochina Communist party, building up networks of supporters. In 1960 Sihanouk launched a crackdown on the communists during which the party's secretary, Tou Samouth, disappeared. Pol Pot stepped into his shoes and emerged as the head of the party's Cambodian section. Accusations would later surface that Pol Pot had connived in Samouth's murder to clear his route to the top in what was his first act of political violence. Pol Pot, however, denied any role in the killing.

In 1963 he fled to the countryside to lead the resistance against Sihanouk. From then on, he would become "Brother Number One", the shadowy head of the Communist maquis hiding in camps in northeastern Cambodia.

In 1965 he travelled to Hanoi, where tensions were building with the Vietnamese. Pol Pot bristled at what he saw as their superior attitude and demands that the Cambodians hold off from armed struggle against Sihanouk until North Vietnam had won its war against the United States. He later travelled to China, where the Cultural Revolution was swirling up. Pol Pot was said to have been impressed by Mao Zedong's vision of permanent revolution, his harnessing of young, impressionable minds, and the destruction of all vestiges of history.

The armed struggle began in 1968 when Khmer Rouge guerrillas clashed with the army and police. The situation in Cambodia began to unravel and in 1969 the US began its secret bombing of Vietnamese bases in Cambodia. At the beginning of 1970 Sihanouk left for his annual cure at a spa in France and was deposed by his chief general, Lon Nol. The new rightwing regime in Phnom Penh galvanised the Chinese and Vietnamese, previously only lukewarm supporters of Pol Pot, and they stepped up help.

Sihanouk was set up in Beijing as the nominal head of a united front against Lon Nol, while Pol Pot took command at a base in northeastern Cambodia. He had just a few thousand men under arms, but with Vietnamese weapons and training they were becoming a more effective force. Vietnamese troops, tempered by years of war in their own country, held off offensives by Lon Nol. US bombers took an enormous toll, beating back Khmer Rouge attacks on Phnom Penh in 1973.

Driven by Pol Pot's virulent Maoism and his vision of a racially pure country, the revolution destroyed everything Cambodians held dear

A YEAR later the guerrillas formed a noose around the capital. Its population had swollen as people fled there to escape US bombings and the rigid social control imposed in areas under Khmer Rouge control.

The final assault on Phnom Penh began in the dry season in 1975. At the beginning of April Lon Nol fled into exile and the US embassy was hurriedly evacuated. On April 17 Pol Pot's silent soldiers, many of them just teenagers clad in black pyjamas, arrived in the city and ordered all 2 million people to evacuate. In the intense heat people were forced on to the roads on foot, families were separated in the crush, even hospital wards were savagely cleared. As far as the Khmer Rouge were concerned, they were all enemies.

Only when the city was empty did Pol Pot arrive to take over. He became prime minister in the shadowy government that presided over a smouldering ghost town. He began to work on the Four-Year plan under which Cambodia would make its great leap forward to socialism by 1979. Rice yields would be tripled to three tonnes a hectare and a vast area of land would be planted in the malarial jungles of northeastern Cambodia. Those forced out of the cities, known as "new people" because they were supposed to abandon all links with the past, were sent to these areas to dig canals and clear fields.

Hundreds of thousands died of disease, hunger and beatings. Of a population of 7 million, as many as 2 million died. The Khmer Rouge cadres saw them as expendable, telling them: "Keeping you is no gain. Losing you is no loss."

Stubbornly ignorant of the realities of Cambodian agriculture, Pol Pot believed rice exports would finance his new vision of a developed Cambodia. Food production declined precipitously. Believing that the family stood in the way of his radical vision of socialism, he tried to break down the capitalist structure by splitting families and forcing people to eat in communal halls. Driven by the virulent Maoism of its isolated leaders and their vision of a racially pure country, the revolution destroyed everything Cambodians held dear, unravelling the connections of Buddhism, village life, friends and family.

By 1977 Pol Pot's paranoia had started to fuel a series of rampaging, self-destructive purges. The deaths and torture at Tuol Sleng, a school turned into an interrogation centre named S-21, would be one of the most macabre legacies of his rule and the strongest evidence of its intense pathology. Some 16,000 people, many of them Khmer Rouge cadres and their families, passed through Tuol Sleng, where they were photographed and their confessions kept in well-ordered files.

A neat, clerical attitude contrasted with unimaginable horrors at Tuol Sleng, where teenagers became expert at strapping their victims to metal bed frames and extracting false confessions through torture. The confessions seemed to fulfil Pol Pot's need to see proof that his fantasies of betrayal were real. The documents from S-21, Chandler wrote, "provided his vision of the world — with Cambodia surrounded by enemies and the country itself seen as concentric circles with the party leadership at the centre".

Tales of what was happening in Cambodia started to trickle out in 1977 through refugees fleeing to Thailand, but the closed country remained an enigma. Western analysts were only able to connect the fact that Saloth Sar and Pol Pot were the same person when he was photographed on a visit to Beijing. However, hidden by the secrecy, Pol Pot's regime was starting to unravel. Tensions were rising with the Vietnamese, who had sent troops across the border to retaliate for Cambodian massacres on their side. In December he cut relations with Hanoi and accused Vietnam of aggression. Hanoi, which had remained silent until then, began referring to his "barbaric, medieval policies".

On December 25, 1978 Vietnam sent 100,000 men across the border and quickly destroyed Cambodian defences. Sihanouk, who had spent the previous years under house arrest, was hustled out on a plane to Beijing less than 24 hours before the Vietnamese arrived in the capital. Pol Pot fled to Thailand on the morning of January 7, 1979.

That day marked the end of what Cambodians call "the era of the contemptible Pot". But it did not mark the end of his career. Supported by the Thai military, he was able to regroup on the frontier and rebuild some of his guerrilla units, although he was supposed to have stepped down as head of the Khmer Rouge in favour of the supposedly more innocuous Khieu Samphan. His rhetoric turned more to stirring up the ancient passions of Cambodian nationalism and the deep fear of being swamped by Vietnam. After 1981 he disappeared from public view, living in guarded camps along the border and travelling to Beijing for medical treatment for his persistent malaria.

Little is known about his personal life or personality other than descriptions of him as calm and charismatic. He married Khieu Ponnary, a teacher he met in Paris, in July 1956. A sombre, austere woman whose sister was married to Khmer Rouge leader Ieng Sary, she would eventually spiral down into madness and spent much of the 1980s in a hospital in Beijing. Pol Pot married for a second time in the 1980s to a peasant woman in her 30s called Sar. She bore him his only child, a daughter born in 1986.

Vietnam began to pull its troops out of Cambodia in 1989 and two years later a peace agreement was signed in Paris. Pol Pot refused to allow his party to join elections and soon the Khmer Rouge were marginalised, cut off by their patrons in China.

AFTER ordering the execution of one of his lieutenants Son Sen, who he believed had tried to betray him, Pol Pot attempted to flee but was captured and tried by his former supporters, not for crimes against humanity but for his role in the internal struggles of the Khmer Rouge. His bizarre trial, at which crowds chanted slogans while he sat impassive and unmoved, was filmed by American journalist Nate Thayer who later interviewed Pol Pot, his first contact with a Western journalist since the early 1980s.

The interview revealed his profound delusions and his intense hatred of the Vietnamese. He denied even knowing about the deaths at Tuol Sleng, which he described as an "exhibition" set up by the Vietnamese. He told Thayer that although the Khmer Rouge had made mistakes, their actions were justified by the threat of annexation from Vietnam. "I came to carry out the struggle, not to kill people ... my conscience is clear. As I told you before, they fought against us, so we had to take measures to defend ourselves."

Pol Pot spent his last months under house arrest in a wood and thatch hut, partially blind after a stroke in 1995. His books had been taken from him and he complained of boredom, although he was allowed a radio, on which he listened to the Voice of America.

Although he talked about the deaths of his compatriots in a flat monotone, he was animated when discussing his health, according to Thayer. "You look at me from the outside, you don't know what I have suffered."

In 1987 he told a group of political students that as long as his followers continued the fight against the Vietnamese, he would "die peacefully". His weakened force of guerrillas is barely capable of fighting now. But Pol Pot leaves behind a country and people still recovering from his years in power.

When Cambodian refugees from his regime of terror arrived in the US some were blind. Doctors could find no physical reason for their loss of sight, which seemed to have been caused by intense trauma. Pol Pot's legacy was a country where people willed themselves to be blind rather than witness more of the agonies he wrought.

Robert Templer

Pol Pot (Saloth Sar), guerrilla leader and dictator, born January 1925; died April 15, 1998

The danger of self-improvement

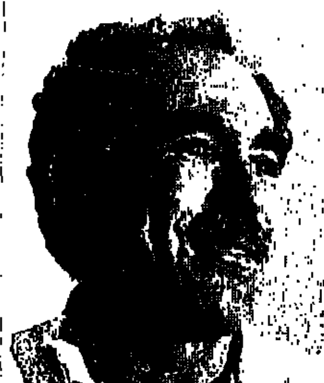
Tim Radford meets the Princeton professor whose warning on human genetic engineering has drawn fire from critics but growing acceptance from scientists

WATCH out for *Homo proteus*, the species that changes its own shape.

Last month Cambridge physicist Stephen Hawking told President Clinton — at a millennium lecture at the White House — that humans were likely to redesign themselves completely over the next 1,000 years. Also last month Visions (Oxford £18.99), by the New York physicist Michio Kaku, proposed that humans would get up to all sorts of tricks, including replacing their own organs as they wear out and (if they try hard enough) maybe even engineering wings.

Later this year, in a new book called Consilience (to be published by Little, Brown), Edward O Wilson, the great evolutionary theorist of Harvard university, will argue the same thing: that *Homo sapiens* is about to decommission natural selection, that from now on human evolution will be a matter for science and technology, tempered by ethics and political choice.

Actually, Lee Silver of Princeton university said it all in January in a book called Remaking Eden (Weidenfeld, £20) and got into terrible trouble. The irony is that unlike the others, Silver is a molecular biologist and really does go around altering life as we know it, although not human life. Another irony is that he got it in the neck, in the Guardian, from Lord Winston, one of the giants of reproductive biology. Winston has himself dramatically altered life for many families, simply



Lee Silver: fears the power of the market place PHOTO: TOM JENKINS

by making children possible for them. "We scientists should understand that support for our subject — and hence well-being of our society — depends on proper public understanding of science and accurate appraisal of the risks and benefits it provides," Winston wrote. "Dr Silver is simply likely to bring an important subject into disrepute."

One of Silver's offences was to take the tentative and clumsy knowledge of human genes that now exists, and propose a future *Homo supergeneticus*. Silver is entirely unrepentant.

"My fear of genetic engineering is not so much that it will be used to hurt people, because most people want not to hurt their children; most people want to give their children advantages in life . . . [but] that it won't be available to everybody. It will cause greater social injustice. That's my real fear," he says.

"I don't think it is going to be used terribly. I think it is going to be used to prevent disease. The problem is — in the US — that it is going to be controlled by the market place. And I am very cynical about the market place."

His critics, he says, see the technology as limited. He doesn't. If we can tamper with one gene, why not five, why not 20? It will begin in simple ways at first: the provision of resistance to disease, the elimination of faulty heart genes. Then there will be the additions. One per cent of the people in the world have natural resistance to the HIV virus. Wouldn't it be useful to hand on an immunity to Aids? "So what's so terrible about giving something to your child that other people can naturally give to their child?" he asks.

"But then, in the future, the question is: how far can we remove ourselves from human beings? I really think the day will come, whether in 100 years, or 1,000 years, when we really will have a better understanding of how our brain works, and be able to go far beyond. We are all human beings, and basically very similar to each other. But if we stepped out of that, that's dangerous. I think it is awful, this huge gap between the haves and the have-nots, and genetic engineering just widens that gap."

He doesn't have a problem with altering soya beans, or spraying frost-resistant bacteria on Californian strawberries. He does disconcerting things to mice embryos, like create chimeras — laboratory mice with DNA from four parents instead of two. But genetics is now harnessed to robotics and computing, and the exponential acceleration of the technology astounds him. He, remember, is one of the practitioners. One criticism of his book was that humans could look only at two or three genes, not the whole lot.

"I would have thought that was true, two or three years ago. But all of a sudden, they invent the DNA chip." The chip gives the potential to look at 100,000 genes, and although scientists don't yet know what most of them do, they will soon.

"It is very simple. It is a little chip, just like a computer chip, but you can put a million different little drops of DNA detectors on it. What these little drops do is detect the presence of a gene. We only have 100,000 genes, or fewer. On this little chip you put down the 10 most common forms of each of our genes and then you take blood, or cells, and put them on this chip, and the chip will tell you exactly what form of every gene you have got. This is really, really remarkable. It blows open the whole game."

In one way, just the act of writing changed things for Silver. When he started writing Remaking Eden, he was an atheist. When he finished, he was not quite so sure.



Thirty years of war in Northern Ireland has created a culture of violence as heroism, writes **Linda Grant**

Where hard men face hard choices

FROM now on, if the peace can be made to hold, Northern Ireland will exist in the shadow of its heroes. Gerry Adams evoked their presence in his first words after the deal was made. It was Easter, he said, and at Easter what do we think of but the 1916 Easter Rising?

Can Ireland do without heroes? I can't think of any countries that even try, so deep-seated is our need for icons. But the identity of newly-emergent states are the ones whose identity is most bound up in great myths about great men — not untouchable figures of a mythic golden age, as those Madame Tussaud's waxworks, Lord Nelson and the Duke of Wellington, are for Britain — but the very model of how the boldest and most daring could live their lives.

And the conundrum that kids in Derry and Drumcree and the Falls Road confront today is this: if you're not going to set yourself up as the next Michael Collins or Bobby Sands, who will you be in the new Northern Ireland? A guy who manages a supermarket?

To make peace requires a monumental mind shift, but as the process that has been taking place since the 1994 ceasefire, culminating in Good Friday's events shows, it can be done. Making peace is basically an act of will-power, forcing yourself to make compromises, to accept that there are no complete winners and total losers. Ireland is not to be united without the democratic consent of all the people. The South is to have a say in the management of the North. But it is one thing to make a deal, quite another to live with its consequences, which involves reinventing yourself and re-mapping your own psychology.

The first people to be affected will be those who have borne as a badge of honour the title "Men of Violence". Four years ago Rita O'Hare, Sinn Fein's press officer, said: "All Republicans are looking forward with intense hope to a period where they will not have to fight any more." She painted a portrait of the IRA as idealists nurtured by the inspiration of the French Revolution, their creed the socialist tenets of equality and fraternity. If this were Hollywood, the terrorists to be released over the next two years would be seen in a closing shot tilling the sod and, as the long day closes, trudging home for a pint of porter.

In the Republic of Ireland, however, a leading Irish figure who lived close to the border said that if there were peace, sectors of the IRA would simply transform themselves (if they hadn't started to already) into a professional Mob, using extensive international contacts to make inroads into arms smuggling, drugs and prostitution. He pointed to the mafia, which began as an organised protest by a semi-serf class against absentee landlords.

O'Hare was horrified when I put this to her. But those who signed up to the struggle as part of a wave of sixties idealism, and saw parallels between their own situation and the civil rights movement in the United States, were later joined by wave upon wave of new recruits growing up in the middle of a string of tit-for-tat terror attacks that no one could remember the beginning of. For O'Hare, the ideological inspirations for her life were Marat and Frantz Fanon. How true is that of anyone who wasn't even born in 1968?

What 30 years of war in Ireland has created is a culture of violence as heroism which has become encoded, like DNA, into male identity. Despite the presence of women in leading positions in Sinn Fein and the incarceration of women prisoners in Armagh prison in conditions that elicited an international protest in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the gender division has tended to be between the hard men and the various, largely impotent attempts by women to found crusades for peace.

Since the beginning of the Troubles, young kids with dead-end lives on each side have found an allure and meaning in going to the terrorists, as young blacks in urban America have fallen hard for the glamorous self-destruction of the gangsta lifestyle. In Ireland, a prison term is a trophy. The Troubles have made something of these guys' lives, given them something to tell their grandchildren. Now what? Now who are they going to be? Lads without a job or working in a menial trade?



Painters put the finishing touches to a mural by born-again Christians on Belfast's Shankill Road. The young today have to find a role for themselves that goes beyond sectarianism PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN ...

Northern Ireland's future psychology lies along one of two paths. There is a route which would take it to where Vietnam is today, with a determination among the young to amputate the past, and a hunger for normality. In Vietnam in 1989, heroes of the Ho Chi Minh trail with chestfuls of medals told me how the teenagers weren't interested in their acts of guerrilla warfare. What they wanted were discos and mini-skirts and fast cars. But that yearning for consumer goods can hide a more complex displacement of identity.

If you're not going to be the next Michael Collins or Bobby Sands, who will you be in the new Northern Ireland?

In Israel, earlier this month, a leading pop singer remarked that his generation was trying to find a significance for itself in a country that had woven 50 years worth of myths out of the tales of its successive waves of heroes, from its "freedom fighters" of 1948 to its daring secret agents of present-day Mossad.

If Israel really did hand back the Golan, withdraw from Lebanon and come to a territorial accommodation with the Palestinians, how could guys like him write their way into the history books? How could they feel anything but small next to those who have gone before? "Peace is made by people with pencils," he said. And people with pencils aren't heroes.

Nobody who has had any involvement in the peace process is suggesting that the sectarian hatred between the two communities will evaporate overnight, but the implacable hostility can be eroded if specific grievances no longer rub salt into old wounds. The parallel task is creating social and economic conditions that ensure that if sections of the IRA and Loyalists do diversify into organised crime, they don't come to represent a potent force of attraction for young men with nothing else to do with themselves, who have no means of self-actualisation in a place where heroism has always been how you make your mark.

Countries end wars with various proclamations that the world they are creating is going to be one fit for heroes. In Vietnam the heroes are ghosts, rattling around with their clanking, medal-shaped props of their heroism, but no role. Israel, on the other hand, continues to have much invested in sloughing off the distressing definition of Jews as passive people who went like lambs to the slaughter that it has been a 50-year crusade to force everyone to be a potential hero fighting for survival and self-hood.

Who will the people of Northern Ireland be after the time of the heroes? Who are they anyway? No one can remember any more; they've been living as heroes or protesters against heroism for so long. Now they have to return to normal life, to the mundane, the humdrum, the worries about the mortgage or the rent. It is the piquant, ironic tragedy of warriors that what they are supposed to be fighting for is peace and when they get it, by and large they don't know what to do with it.

If the peace in Northern Ireland holds and it becomes a country like any other, or rather part of one, where are the future hard men to go? What happens to the culture of violence? A line from William Empson comes ominously to mind: "Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills/The waste remains, the waste remains and kills."

Fasten seat-belts, extinguish all hope

CITY OF WORDS
John Ryle

I *'M NOT* **afraid of flying. Well, just a little. But I have an ever-growing dread of airports: of the limbo of the transit lounge, the horrid bustle of the check-in, the rumble of the moving walkways, the glimpses of skeletal bags and briefcases as they pass through the scanner; of the anxious press of fellow-passengers, and the moment of no return before the entrance to the pod-like gangway that leads to the plane. The doleful blend of tedium and urgency that accompanies this long, drawn-out passage from earth to air seems increasingly daunting.**

And as cities become more like airports, and some airports, like London's Heathrow, grow till they resemble cities within cities, air travel is slowly taking over more and more of the ground. On board a plane, there's a sense of relief, an end to responsibility. The moment of refusal has been and gone. Once airborne, there is absolutely nothing you can do. You can't get out; you can't take the controls. You are no longer the captain of your fate; the pilot is. The illusion of choice that accompanies daily life is over — until you arrive at your destination and confront the new ordeal of the luggage carousel and the Customs inspection.

Some passengers experience this powerlessness as a source of anxiety; for me, it is the occasion of surrender. Flying is like surgery, like anaesthesia, a form of abandonment; you have no choice but to trust the surgeon, or the pilot.

Annoying people will tell you that you are, statistically speaking, safer in a plane than in a car, safer than you would be on foot, safer, no doubt, than if you stayed at home. But this isn't the point. The long hours in the air, and at the airport, eat into self-reliance. If you can't cultivate fatalism, this irksome waiting time is a breeding ground for imaginary fears. And there are always new reasons for anxiety. Just as your neighbour flips open his computer, ignoring the instructions to wait until the seat-belt sign has gone off, you see an article in Business Week, "Could a laptop bring down a plane?" (Answer: unlikely, but no one knows for sure).

This area of concern — the possibility of electronic interference scrambling the instructions to the mechanism of the plane — is highlighted in a recent issue of the New York Review of Books. It carries an extraordinarily detailed article arguing that the mysterious explosion that downed a TWA flight off Long Island in 1996 may have been caused by electromagnetic emissions, not from a laptop, but from US naval vessels and war planes in the vicinity.

And now we can entertain ourselves with another thought: that our neighbour on the plane, the one who tarried so long in the lavatory, may not be a businessman at all, but a terrorist harbouring a phial of anthrax in a packet of condoms. Even as we have the thought, the plague he brought on board is coursing through the stale recycled air of the cabin. And he is earning air miles all the while.

The airlines themselves don't always help. On a long-haul flight recently, I was startled to find that the in-flight movie was Broken Arrow, an action movie in which John Travolta plays a psychotic airforce pilot who steals a jet carrying nuclear warheads. As we flew over the United States, we were compelled to watch sequence after sequence of planes crashing and burning in the Nevada desert. Tactless, really.

Fears may be liars. And here I am just adding to them. How did I get started on this subject? Enough already. If you are on a plane, you may wish to leave now. But please stay in your seat until this article has reached a complete halt.

Penelope Fitzgerald, who last month became the first foreigner to win a top US literary award, talks to **Peter Lennon** about prizes, men and red-hot pokers

A modesty that blazes

THERE was something patronising about the pleasure with which the media reported how modest and surprised Penelope Fitzgerald, aged 82, was at winning the American National Book Critics' Circle fiction award, the first time a non-US writer had won the prize. The implication was that amazement and modesty were the appropriate responses for a grandmother.

But when I gallantly attempted to show that she had no reason to be modest — the Booker Prize in 1979 (for Offshore); three later novels also shortlisted; shortlisted again for the Whitbread and Sunday Express awards, and now she had shouldered aside the small American literary mountain which is Philip Roth and outpaced the much-hyped Don DeLillo — she was having none of it. Modesty is apparently a treasured state of mind.

"Was your surprise modesty or false modesty?" I asked as we sat in her Highgate study.

"Well all modesty is considered false modesty," she said. "I don't really think it is modesty. I think it is a temperament, that you feel you are either one of life's winners or life's losers."

"People have been trying very hard to disabuse you," I said.

She laughed.

I quoted A S Byatt: "Jane Austen's nearest heir, for precision and invention," and Adam Mars-Jones: "A minor miracle of sympathy and crispness."

"No amount of success can persuade you you are a success?" I said.

"No, no, no," she said softly, but permitting no doubt. "I suppose it's rather gloomy. I have never been a young writer," she said (she was 63 when her first novel, The Golden Child, was published), "and never belonged to a group, so really I have missed out."

You still could have gone to town as a literary figure?

"I suppose I could have done. But I didn't."

Her father E G V Knox, editor of Punch during the second world war, used to gloomily pace his room, composing comic verse for the paper while a printers' boy sat in the hall waiting for the result.

But simple labels of modesty or gloominess won't stick. There is nothing obviously gloomy about Penelope Fitzgerald. There is a touch of anxiousness; but she has a ready, light laugh and developed sense of the absurd. What characterises her is a kind of alert repose. In response to a question she will often go into lengthy thought, expressions playing across her face like wind on water: then she comes out with a quick, neat, if sometimes subtly evasive reply.

You soon get the impression that she is one of those people who, when it comes to matters which concern her, is quietly unyielding.

Her second book was about the life of "Uncle Ronnie" (Monsignor Ronald Knox, a notable prelate in his day) and his brothers. Her publisher pleaded with her to change the title which he felt was vulnerable to facetious comment. With no literary status to support her, she stood fast. The book is called The Knox Brothers.

They were a distinguished lot. She said Ronnie nearly persuaded young Harold Macmillan to become a Catholic. Uncle Wilfred was an Anglican priest and Uncle Dwillyn a cryptographer in both world wars who helped break the Enigma code.

Under the heading of matters which do not concern her comes delivering acceptance speeches for awards. She let her American publisher write and deliver hers.

"What did he say you said?"

"I don't know," she said, perfectly indifferent.

Matters which require a brief answer get a brief answer. Why did the barge on the Thames in which she lived with her husband and three children sink? "Holes," she said. What was she doing in the first place, squatting in a spongy barge at Chelsea Reach in the 1960s, a few steps from the swinging King's Road? "It was cheap."

The men in her books, such as Fred Fairly in The Gate Of Angels, a Cambridge physicist who has lost his religious faith, are often innocent, helpless creatures.

'The sort of men I like are life's losers. They struggle gallantly, but really ought to be left in peace. Life is just a bit too much for them'

"I think women are stronger than men. I make them stronger in my novels. The sort of men I like are life's losers. They struggle gallantly, but they really ought to be left in peace. Life is just a bit too much for them."

It might not be too fanciful to deduce the genesis of her literary career from this. Her husband was "in the travel business". Here he was in the most helpless of situations, a travel man not only moored to an unmoveable boat that eventually sank, but also tethered by terminal illness. She wrote that first novel, The Golden Child, to amuse him. It came out of a notion she got that the reason the lighting for the Tutankhamen exhibition was so dim was that the mummy was a fake. Then came Offshore, about the boat, which won the Booker. Her career followed a classical pattern.

First she drew on her own experience: Human Voices (1980), about her time as a sound assistant working on the BBC Forces request programme during the war. "Many of them were dead before their requests got on the air," she said. Then The Bookshop, a time as an assistant in a bookshop, and The Gate Of Angels (1990), her experience of university life.

The opening of The Gate Of Angels contains a very early example of mad cows. On the road to Cambridge she noticed heavy winds had blown trees down flat and cows were gambolling crazily, driven mad by this unique opportunity to nibble at the tops of trees. One suspects a slighting reference here to Cambridge dons (she went to Oxford).

Her style of writing is deceptively calm: the tone is quiet, resigned to the foolishness of people, amused but not censorious. You recognise immediately someone with a delicious sense of words and natural ease in handling them.

Having exhausted known environments, she turned to foreign territory and times past. She borrowed from the London Library the diaries and private documents of Friedrich von Hardenberg, an 18th century philosopher later known as Novalis, who had complicated ideas about the nature of language. He fell in love at first sight with a girl of 12. She died at 15; he died aged 29.

Out of two years of research (never once troubled by the obliging London Library) came the winning Blue Flower. "An improbable masterpiece," declared A S Byatt.

We discussed the popular idea that characters can run away from their creator. She said it was nonsense: you have to be in control. I told how E M Forster explained a 30-year silence by saying he had started a book in which all the characters waiting on a railway platform got on a train, went off, and he could never get them back again.

"Whimsical creature," said Fitzgerald disapprovingly.

She had once admired Forster's Passage To India and Howards End, but while tutoring students for Oxford and Cambridge university entrance exams, she submitted him to the ultimate test of continual repetition. With his ready symbols and balanced structure, he was perfect for teaching writing, but over time she found the works just did not stand up.

Penelope Fitzgerald: 'No amount of success can persuade you you are a success' PHOTO: TOM JENKINS

Surprisingly, the book which survived this rigorous test, and on whom English boys and girls were ready to make a special effort, was James Joyce's Portrait Of An Artist.

I tried Flaubert. "Only men like Flaubert," she said.

Because he is patronising to his women? She gave a guarded nod.

"Jane Austen does not describe the characters," she said. "She does not even say whether they are dark or fair. But usually when they come on you know they are on." Here was clear approval.

Penelope Fitzgerald's first published work was a life of the Pre-Raphaelite artist Burne-Jones. When a friend gave Burne-Jones a book he disliked, he ran a red-hot poker through it.

"Every one had red-hot pokers in those days," she said, with an air of regret that such instruments of literary criticism were no long readily available.

Television adaptations of the classics got a hot stab. "I hope there will be an end to them," she said. "Surely they have nearly reached the end and we shan't be plagued with these desperate representations."

At her feet were two piles of books. She is a judge for this year's Booker and already well into reading 200 entries. The smaller one, of two books, she nodded to with respect; the larger pile of rejects she gave a scalding glance.

She swore me to secrecy about the names of the two authors who have so far escaped the hot poker.

To order The Blue Flower (published in paperback by Flamingo at £6.99) at the special price of £5.99 contact CultureShop

Cometh the Iceman, cometh the star

THEATRE
Michael Billington

FILM stars sometimes shrink on stage. But Kevin Spacey, who plays Hickey in the four-hour-plus revival of Eugene O'Neill's **The Iceman Cometh** at London's Almeida not only brings to the role a long theatrical pedigree but a spellbinding technical assurance: even more importantly, in Howard Davies's exemplary production, he is part of a first-rate ensemble that gives the play the copious detail of an American genre painting.

Set in Harry Hope's dilapidated bar in downtown New York in 1912, it confronts the great theme that dominates modern drama from The Wild Duck to A Streetcar Named Desire: whether human happiness depends on consoling life-lies or confrontation with reality. O'Neill's sundry barflies are all the non-walking emotional wounded sustained by cheap whisky and pipe-dreams. Only with the arrival of Hickey, a travelling salesman and sudden, messianic convert to truth-telling, are they forced to act out their red-eyed fantasies with predictably disastrous results.

You could easily make out a case against O'Neill's play. He never uses one word where 20 will do: typically Larry Slade, the ex-anarchist and grandstand philosopher who acts as a sardonic chorus, says of Hope's watering-hole, "It's the No Chance Saloon. It's Bedrock Bar. The End of the Line Café. The Bottom of the Sea Rathskeller." You kind of get the point. In arguing that mankind needs its protective illusions, O'Neill also seems to demolish any hope of Utopia: again in the words of Larry, "you can't build a marble temple out a mixture of mud and manure." But can you generalise about all humanity from a cross-section of bar-room derelicts?

The great thing about O'Neill as a playwright, however, is that he makes virtues of his defects. He turns repetition into a dramatic strength, drawing us into the hermetic circularity of these topers' fantasies: he even has the wit and confidence to send up his characters' prolixity so that, in the midst of Hickey's final confession, an exasperated Harry cries, "Get it over, you long-winded bastard."

Even O'Neill's defeatism is balanced by the quality that, I believe, gives the play its universality: its warning against ersatz messiahs whose reformist zeal camouflages personal guilt. Just as Ibsen's truth-telling idealist Gregers Werle in The Wild Duck is driven by filial revenge, so O'Neill's Hickey is spurred on by the need to expiate a domestic crime. The play has become more, not less, topical, as America — in particular — seems filled with raucous evangelists and self-help merchants assuaging their own neuroses. When an idealist turns up at your door, suggests O'Neill, check out his credentials.

This is reinforced by Spacey's interpretation of Hickey as a born-again zealot. He brings to the role the dapper earnestness, the ability to absorb criticism and the blithe unawareness of reality of the blinkered pulpiteer. Spacey also makes the point that the real danger of the convert lies in his desperate sincerity: he handles Hickey's final confessional monologue brilliantly, turning expiation of his own sin into a form of faith-healing, touching each of the bar's occupants in turn as if they were his disciples.

Larry, the bar-room philosopher, is no less pivotal a role: a barely



Spacey with Tim Piggott-Smith in The Iceman Cometh PHOTO: NEIL LIBBERT

recognisable Tim Pigott-Smith, his bald pate surrounded by greying tufts of unruly hair, catches exactly the weary nihilism of the lapsed agitator. And, from a remarkable ensemble, I would pick out Patrick Godfrey and Nicholas Day as a pair of warring old soldiers who fought on opposite sides in the Boer war, Clarke Peters as an angry ex-gambler smarting under a barrage of racial insults and Duncan Bell as a wrecked law-school alumnus.

Bob Crowley's set has exactly the right stylised realism. And Howard Davies is sensitive both to O'Neill's tragi-comedy and his fundamental argument: that humankind cannot bear very much reality and that the zeal of the salvationist is, more often than not, an echo of private disturbance.

Yasmina Reza justly hit the jackpot with Art, a play in which a painting became a test of friendship. Now with **The Unexpected Man** at the Pit, again translated by Christopher Hampton, she uses a book as a source of adventure: the result is civilised, elegant, but a bit too self-consciously exquisite for my carnivorous taste.

Two people, a man and a woman, sit opposite each other on a Paris-Frankfurt train. Rather than directly converse, they engage in interior monologues. He, Paul Parsky, is a novelist: successful but gnawed by bitterness about age, life, critics, his own literary inadequacy and his daughter's impending marriage to a much older man.

She, Martha, is a stylish widow who happens to have his latest novel in her handbag, who is half in love with him through his work but who is terrified of bringing out the book for fear of mutual embarrassment.

It is a situation that leads Reza into all sorts of speculation: in particular, the idea that fiction has a greater reality than life.

On one level, Reza is dealing, not unlike Chekhov in The Seagull, with the divorce between the writer and the work: between the jobbing craftsman and and the fictional world he creates. But, on another level, she is illustrating Paul Auster's point that the reader writes the book. While Parsky sees his work as an expression of his own rancorous cynicism, Martha discovers in it a poetry and compassion of which he himself is unaware.

All this is intelligent enough. But the form itself is rather restrictive. The main pleasure lies in the production and the acting. Michael Gambon and Eileen Atkins marvellously convey two people locked in separate worlds. This is acting of the highest calibre and it gives flesh and bone to what might otherwise be a quietly civilised radio play.

When Harry meets Woody

CINEMA
Richard Williams

AFTER sending postcards from Paris and Venice in Everyone Says I Love You, Woody Allen is back on his own patch with **Deconstructing Harry**. Here we have the plight of a New York author surrounded by posses of ex-wives and girlfriends, squads of disapproving Jewish relatives, and shelves of pill bottles, so poorly insulated against the wider world that even a trip to his old college requires the presence of his son, his oldest friend, and a hooker in pink vinyl hotpants in his sable Volvo. Rather surprisingly, in the presence of such an abundance of promising material, he's experiencing a case of writer's block.

In his 27th film, Allen seems glad to be home. His audience's reaction may be more equivocal. Often the themes seem as familiar as toothache, the jokes constructed according to formulas patented long ago. Yet, despite its faults, this is a film that reveals a 62-year-old director whose fascination with himself is still exceeded, or at least matched, by his fascination with the possibilities of his craft.

In fact, it may be unwise to overstate the degree of self-reflection in this particular project. Whether through cussedness or a shrewd understanding of marketing techniques, Allen encourages such speculation by choosing to play the part of the writer, Harry Block — a man accused by his intimates of strip-mining their emotional lives to provide the fuel for his art.

In a giddy parade of interleaved scenes, the fictionalised characters play out the parts assigned to them by the author.

The film begins with such a sequence, taken from one of his short stories, as Richard Benjamin (the fictionalised Block) and Julia Louis-Dreyfus (a fictionalised sister-in-law) couple energetically in an upstairs room while looking down on a lawn where their respective partners are preparing a barbecue. The sexual jokes, which start promisingly ("Could you try not to chew?" Benjamin says, addressing the top of his partner's head), have already gone on too long when Block's real wife (Kirstie Alley) interrupts to discuss this evidence of his betrayal.

There are 80-odd speaking parts, many of them played by high-profile performers, in a film that lasts barely 90 minutes. Bob Balaban plays Block's best friend, Elisabeth Shue is an acolyte turned lover, and Billy Crystal is his nemesis (younger, better-looking, no angst). Tobey Maguire plays another of Block's literary versions of himself. So does Stanley Tucci, as a man who, like Block, marries his analyst.

There are no captions or other signalling devices. Susan Morse, a long-term member of Allen's production team, edits with a briskness that demands the audience's alertness and guards against the danger of saggy introspection. The chopping up of Block's soliloquies, using a technique borrowed from TV news interviews, creates a useful sense of impatience with the character's self-indulgence.

As a distancing and discomforting device, this also carries us further away from our initial impulse to see the character of the neurotic New York writer not as Block but as Allen himself. It's an understandable delusion, encouraged by the nature of Block's wisecracks ("I think you're the opposite of paranoid," he tells his stepbrother. "I think you go around with the insane delusion that people like you") and by the way in which the details of Allen's unorthodox private life have become public property. Yet there is little obvious correspondence between the facts of that life and the outline of Deconstructing Harry.

However, nothing about the movie intrigues as much as its final shot, when Block hunkers down behind his typewriter, his inspiration refuelled, starting his next novel. Suddenly, Allen's face assumes not just a new expression but an entirely different and unfamiliar shape. The true light, perhaps.



Allen, Elisabeth Shue and Billy Crystal in Deconstructing Harry

Fidelity to source material is clearly not a worry to Alfonso Cuarón, the Mexican director of **Great Expectations**, who retains the basic outline of Dickens's novel but changes all the names bar one (Estella's) and moves the action from the 19th century Essex marshes to Florida's Gulf Coast and the Manhattan art scene in the present day.

So Pip becomes Finnegan (Ethan Hawke), a young fisherman, while Magwitch becomes Lustig (Robert De Niro), who looms out of the sea to terrify the boy and reappears years later at the door of his artist's studio in SoHo, where De Niro gets to deliver the most banal speech of his career. Miss Havisham becomes Nora Dinsmoor (Anne Bancroft), who drifts around her ruined ocean-front mansion in a variety of seventies gladrags, dancing to every known version of Besame Mucho while schooling Estella (Gwyneth Paltrow) to take revenge on men.

This is, in fact, the first centrefold movie. Halfway through, Finn and Estella are reunited in New York. He is a painter, on the brink of a sensational success. In his studio, naturally, he commits her to canvas. The camera catches her, stripped off, in poses less familiar to Picasso than to the readers of Penthouse. Until that point, the film has been tolerably colourful and engaging. The back half, however, loses all purchase on the audience's interest, wasting the talents of a couple of good young actors. And as a satire on the American art scene, Beast The Movie had a far sharper edge.

Brilliant in its bleakness

NEW RELEASE
David Bennun

"*IT IS*," observed one visitor to my flat, "a bit bloody gloomy, isn't it?"

My visitor was referring to Massive Attack's Mezzanine (Virgin, £14.99), an album so dark that it seems to soak up the light in the room like a miniature black hole. It was on the tape deck for the seventh time and it wasn't getting any brighter.

When the band's first album, Blue Lines, came out in 1991, it was so out-and-out extraordinary, so shockingly different and brilliant, that hardly anyone noticed it was a hip-hop revolution in itself, because hardly anyone recognised it as hip-hop. So when Protection arrived three years later — three years which gave the band's collaborator Tricky and fellow Bristolians Portishead time to come up with their own different and brilliant albums — it seemed a little low-key. Well, it was. It took about two months in its company to realise it was sublime. The band had made a second masterpiece by daring to distance themselves from the first.

Ranks of pallid imitators have cheapened Massive Attack's sound and debased their ideas. Which leaves them with a problem common to influential innovators: how do you avoid becoming no more than a better version of everyone who mimics you?

Tricky reacted directly to the problem by making Pre-Millennium Tension, a record so confrontational and freakish that no one would have the brass balls to replicate it. Portishead simply ignored it and made another, very fine Portishead album. Massive Attack have side-stepped it by once again changing tack and coming up with a third eye-poppingly distinct record. The only thing the three follow-ups share is their mood: bleak. Tricky's was abrasively bleak, Portishead's starkly so.

Mezzanine is gorgeously bleak. It is a beautiful and in no way laughable or exaggerated record — about disillusion, depression, death, decay and all the other big, bad D-words. If anything, it's gothic in the literary sense.

Mezzanine sounds performed rather than programmed, and there's fuzz guitar all over the shop. Only a couple of tracks are resolutely digitized: Inertia Creeps and the title track. The hushed, self-assured core members Robert Del Naja and Grant Marshall have turned thoroughly nasty on Black Milk, Inertia Creeps and Group 4 ("To think that I lay next to you, wasting time," says Del Naja, and the fact that he murmurs rather than spits it is all the more unnerving).

The feel of the album depends largely on the volume at which you play it. Set low, it worms its way gently into the foreground. Turned up, it can be nothing short of brutal. If the sense of the album is that everything's wrong, then that feeling has rarely been more effectively expressed.

Mezzanine takes time to be fully appreciated. By then you'll be begging for the Happy Happy Joy Joy song. That or a litre of gin. But it'll be worth it.

To order this CD contact CultureShop (see ad, page 33)

Tripping the light fantastic . . . Light Sentence, with its wire cages, conjures up the torture chamber

Journey of a jaded eye

Mona Hatoum's work sparks off connections but fails to come to life, writes **Adrian Searle**

"*I AM A* camera," wrote Christopher Isherwood. "The camera is the eye of a cruising vulture," wrote William Burroughs. The eye, this time, is a medical probe. We travel on the tip of an endoscope, on a journey into the interior of Mona Hatoum, to the sound of muffled heartbeats, gurgling, rose and pink pulsations. Down into the torchlit wetness, onward and inward, the eye swallowed entire.

Some of us have been on this trip before. Corps Etranger is Hatoum's best-known work. It has already been shown in two recent Tate Gallery exhibitions, Rites Of Passage in 1995 (how good that exhibition seems in retrospect), and as part of Hatoum's Turner Prize-contending show later that same year, when Damien Hirst won. Here it is again in Oxford's Museum of Modern Art, that same vertical white tube, the same swirling images projected at our feet on the circular floor. The same trip. No wetsuit required.

An exhibition of Hatoum's installations, sculptures, objects, photographs and videos at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (until June 28) has travelled from Chicago and New York.

Here, too, is Light Sentence, a second installation from Hatoum's Turner Prize show. It is a locker-room installation of stacked wire cages, a cul-de-sac of battery chicken coops, illuminated by a single light bulb, slowly rising and falling on a motorised flex. The moving shadows thrown on the wall induce a kind of motion sickness as they rise and fall with the light.

Since Picasso's Guernica, the bare light bulb has become a bleak, potent symbol in art, Guston painted it, Jasper Johns sculpted it. Guston made it grotesque and funny, opaque and livid, and it became one of Bacon's more insistent clichés. Standing in Light Sentence, snared among the vertiginous, rearing shadows (that recall the lighting in Expressionist cinema), it's difficult not to think of torture rooms, disorientation techniques, of being stripped under the light bulb's eye. Difficult, too, not to read the work in terms of Hatoum's life — born in Beirut of a Lebanese family, exiled in Britain and cut off from her family by war in 1975 — the personal story that underlines her work. It is difficult not to read this story as a confirmation of her seriousness of purpose, a signal of her integrity, her theme of the body under duress, exposed and threatened, the self displaced.

Hatoum's work is difficult in other ways, too. Another exhibit reads "You Are Still Here", the words etched on to a small mirror. We're still here all right, thinking of another kind of history — a history of exhibitions, of a career, a history of artworks and their travels, readings of artistic influences and confluences and questions of originality; the history, in fact, of the recent past. The eye has become a video recorder, on constant replay.

Entrail Carpet, a big, translucent, gooey, silicone-resin mat of squirming entrail forms, is rather beautiful in its way, but I keep thinking of the scene in Mike Leigh's Nuts In May in which Candice-Marie says to the unfortunate Ray, as he draws on a ciggy: "If I were to take your lungs out, Ray, and put them on this table, you'd be really horrified." Pin Carpet, nearby, is equally literal: instead of a carpet's tufty pile, there are thousands of pins. We smile — ouch! — and move on.

Socle du Monde (Plinth of the World) is Hatoum's homage to Piero Manzoni's work of the same title. Her homage is a huge cube of steel plates with a big magnet inside. The cube is covered with iron filings, held on magnetically and dragged into a pattern of entrail-like forms.

Divan Bed is exactly what the title suggests, but made from oiled metal tread-plate, the kind used for non-slip industrial flooring. Remaking an object in inappropriate materials, as a way of displacing the object, is by now an almost academic procedure. You have to do something pretty extreme to make it work. The bed also made me think of Rachel Whiteread's rubber, resin and plaster bed-bases and mattresses. Hatoum's life-sized baby cots, one with wire stretched taut across the base (imagine an egg in an egg-slicer, imagine the baby as the egg), the other a rubber-cast cot flopped limply on the floor, echo Robert Gober's cots and playpens.

That's the trouble with a lot of work, not just Hatoum's: almost before you apprehend it for itself, it has reminded you of lots of other works, even though the intention might be quite different. Is that what we're left with — endless replays and ricochets, constant short-circuits? The issue of originality has been one of the central themes of 20th century art. Everything has begun to look like a pastiche of something else. Dammit, going round this exhibition I was even struck by the thought that this show was very like the work of Hatoum.

The language has gone stale, the formal route too familiar. I left Hatoum's show feeling empty, but it was the wrong kind of emptiness. It had become a journey of a jaded eye.

Farewell, Kaf of Kaf's Kaf

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

I FEEL emotionally purged and drained, Monica. A finer, purer person. And jolly cheered up, too, if you must know. When Kathy (Gillian Taylforth) left EastEnders on BBC1 last week, she released a tidal flood of testosterone. This woman, Monica, is a grandmother, but every time her doorbell rang, there was another man on the doorstep, offering to leave his wife, his children or his church for her sake and passionately begging her to run away with him. If you find running for a bus a bit much nowadays, this is cheering stuff.

First there was Grant, her brother-in-law, a banister in his hand which he had torn from the stairs in the extremity of his passion. "Come away with me!" he cried, his eyes bulging like his biceps. "We could love each other in a way we've never loved anyone else before!" She said she'd think about it.

Then the vicar, his Adam's apple leaping over his dog collar, "Marry me, will yah? Me 'art is going like a flippin' steam-'ammer." (He is a man of the people.) "Say something, please!" She said she'd think about it.

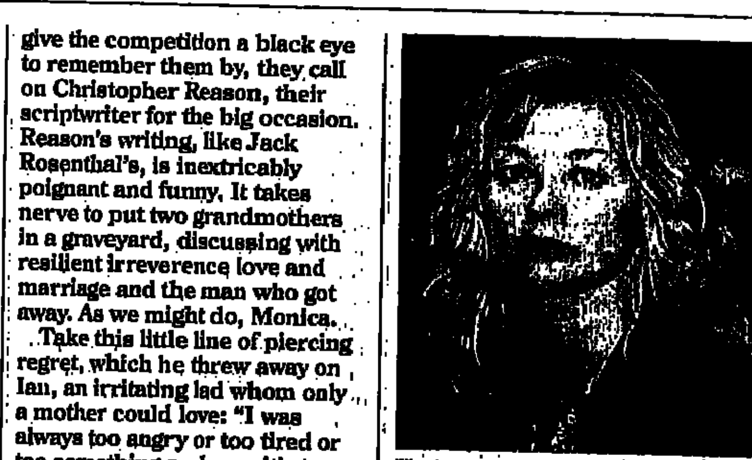
Then came Phil, her estranged husband, a primeval lifeform apparently denied the precious gift of human speech, but uttering poignant, punctured sighs like a pit bull looking at a Bonio.

As Kathy said to her best friend, Pat, "It's like waiting for that old No 19 bus, innit?" They were sitting in a cemetery with Pete. He did not want Kathy to marry him because he was dead. Besides, he had once been married to both Kathy and Pat. "I still reckon he was the best of the bunch," said Kathy. "Wot, Pete?" said Pat incredulously. "Never 'it me. Never got drunk. Never raped me," said Kathy, running through her experience of men. "Never torched his business. Never disappeared into thin air," said Pat, doing ditto.

When EastEnders wants to give the competition a black eye to remember them by, they call on Christopher Reason, their scriptwriter for the big occasion. Reason's writing, like Jack Rosenthal's, is inextricably poignant and funny. It takes nerve to put two grandmothers in a graveyard, discussing with resilient irreverence love and marriage and the man who got away. As we might do, Monica.

Take this little line of piercing regret, which he threw away on Ian, an irritating lad whom only a mother could love: "I was always too angry or too tired or too something and now it's too late." For those of you who haven't the slightest idea what I am talking about, it's already too late. Have you considered taking up juggling instead?

Briefly, the ruling families of Walford are the Beales and the Mitchells (who are loosely based on the Krays). It is not entirely coincidental that the Mitchells' mum is played by Barbara Windsor, a loyal friend of Ron and Reg from way back. The Beales are decent but dull. The Mitchells are psychotic but exciting. Kathy, naturally, married one of each.



Kathy: a battered Madonna

Everyone in Albert Square is or was or will be married to everyone else. Everyone is or has been or will be in jail.

Kathy, a beautiful if battered Madonna, clutched her child and flew away to South Africa. The titles of EastEnders show a map of the Isle of Dogs but now, suddenly, through the window of her plane was the Isle of Dogs itself, dangling in the Thames like a cow cooling a bulging udder. For a moment, as fact and fantasy elided, it felt like the real thing.

Dancing partner

Julie Kavanagh

International Encyclopedia of Dance
OUP 3,072pp (6 vols) £595

READING through the directory of contributors at the beginning of this virtual library of dance scholarship (a project of Dance Perspectives Foundation published by Oxford University Press), instead of taking note of the far-reaching areas of specialist knowledge, I found myself distracted by the number of times "deceased" appeared among the list of writers' names: 36 according to my quick count. Thirty six! Was the scheme somehow jinxed? Or is there a fatal epidemic that mysteriously targets dance buffs across the globe? I discovered the answer in the preface.

This is a venture that began more than 20 years ago and ranges from the history of the *révérance* to articles on ideokinesis or Lindy Hop. One day, at a meeting of dance writers in New York in 1974, Arlene Croce, their doyenne, remarked that what dance really needed was a comprehensive, scholarly encyclopaedia. "And — horrors — everyone in the room looked at me." The "me" was Selma Jeanne Cohen, founding editor, whose implacable determination has made it all happen despite more than two decades of problems.

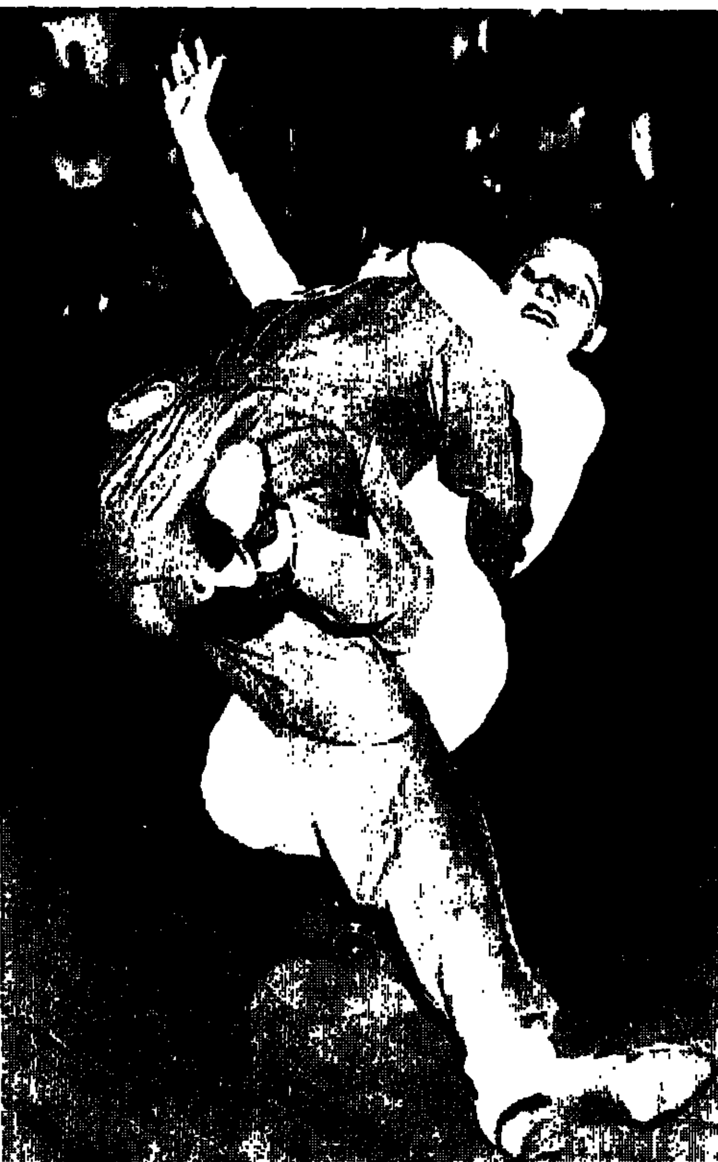
This was never intended to be a biographical dictionary: we already have the indispensable International Dictionary Of Ballet published in 1993 by the St James' Press, several of whose advisers and contributors overlap. Subjects were chosen if they had "significantly affected the course of dance history" or if they had become "a cultural icon", criteria which make Darcy Bussell's exclusion only more mystifying. Not only was she Kenneth MacMillan's last muse, but in the Royal Ballet entry she is definitively described as "the first English woman since Fonteyn recognised on the world stage as a true ballerina". And even where entries have been brought up to the present, their bibliographies too often betray the project's difficult history by stopping in the mid-eighties.

Dance, world dance, clearly takes precedence over ballet, "ethnic awareness" being the encyclopaedia's underlying ideology. Much of its content is written by myriad unknown academics from far-flung universities, a great number of whom have no direct connection to dance. To my surprise I found myself more engrossed by a number of vivid anthropological accounts than I was by many of the Western dance histories. I was drawn into a survey on Kaluli dance of Papua New Guinea by a photograph of a beplumed and painted dancer about to have his back singed by flaming torches.

The Kaluli base their up-and-down, knee-bent bobbing on the motions of a cuckoo-like bird, and in the *gisalo* (now died out because of missionary and government pressure), the performers danced and sang nostalgic songs about the death of friends. Enraged by the anguish they had been made to feel, members of the audience grabbed resin torches and burnt the dancers who, unperturbed, carried on until dawn when they would compensate the people they had made weep with payments of small objects of value. Esoteric dissertations like this are riveting to read.

Alongside the professors of social anthropology, theatre arts, natural history, aesthetics and philosophy; ethnochoreology, ethnomusicology, the dance kinesiologists, ethnologists, folklorists, museum curators, librarians, musicologists and research fellows are the big guns of ballet criticism, writing on their own private passions and writing at length.

The most important contribution is Arlene Croce's 17-page distillation of Balanchine's genius, a personal study of the choreographer as ballet master, teacher, poet and showman written with such insight and clarity that it can't help but be the template against which every other dance entry is measured.



Lindy Hop, also known as the jitterbug or swing, originated in Harlem in the twenties but its roots go back to African dance PHOTO: JULIA SMITH

Inevitably, there are marked discrepancies in the contributors' prose styles, between the liveliness of the Americans in particular and the dreariness of many of the academics. I can't help suspecting that the "multicultural understanding" that motivated the editors frequently led them to choose a foreign contributor over a more familiar name.

This is such an extraordinarily ambitious, magnificent and much needed undertaking that to criticise it at all seems callous. But with its lack of editorial consistency and its cold-shouldering of performers, the International Encyclopedia Of Dance is not the Grove-type bible for which we've all been waiting. That still remains to be written.

New Fiction

Lucy Atkins

All Around Atlantis, by Deborah Eisenberg (Granta £8.99)

THESE excellent short stories are dogged by the sense of impending crisis. The "citizens" are isolated, alienated, self-deceiving: their lives shrouded in lies or secrets, transformed only by moments of (usually harsh) truth. In one, a troubled daughter discovers, after her mother's death, that the father she was always told had died is actually alive. In another, a reformed drug addict becomes obsessed with a wealthy man who lets her down. Characters, dilemmas and emotions are immediate and believable: an engrossing read.

The World More Or Less, by Jean Rouaud, translated by Barbara Wright (Harvill, £14.99)

ROUAUD won the Prix Goncourt in 1991 for his first novel Fields Of Glory, about the impact of the first world war on its survivors. This is the last in a trilogy and the focus is now on the post 1945 generation. The narrator tells of his schooldays and university in the sixties, where he discovers booze, writing and radical politics. But events are less important than Rouaud's ability to glean significance from minutiae, and if the jaunty voice doesn't infuriate you his ruminations on growing up in turbulent times can be poignant.

Heat, by Sally Emerson (Little, Brown, £14.99)

SET IN the Washington DC of ambassadorial parties and political scandal, Emerson shows us the perfect family who fall apart. Beautiful Englishwoman Susan is married to American journalist Jim. They have one child, an improbably wonderful 11-year-old called Rachel. Then, Susan's creepy ex-lover reappears, and slowly, in the sweaty summer heat, Susan begins to seem unhinged. At times heavy-handed, Heat is none the less intriguing.

Ark Baby, by Liz Jensen (Bloomsbury, £15.99)

IT IS five years since the millennium and Britain is in the grip of the "Fertility Crisis". Bobby Sullivan has illegally exterminated a monkey (they have become substitute children), and flees London for the northern town of Thunder Spit. Here he discovers the sexual delights of twins whose house is haunted by a Pepto-Bismol-drinking ghost. Jensen's rollicking tone can obscure her deeper observations about flawed humanity, but those not hung up on realism should glean some laughs.

Selfish People, by Lucy English (Pan, £6.99)

LEAH has a violent husband and three children, though she's young and trendy enough to hang out in stripy leggings with dreadlocked drop-outs in dodgy pubs. Which she does, repeatedly, after she leaves her husband and children. She soon begins a relationship with an equally screwed-up colleague who behaves with callous unpredictability. Leah's self-destructive behaviour rings true, but Selfish People is unusual because it is peopled by the edgy, new-age generation not usually found in novels.

Of cabbages and kings

Robert McCrum

Lewis Carroll: The Alice Companion
by Jo Elwyn Jones and J Francis Gladstone
Macmillan 316pp £25

AS MANY publishers have reminded us, it is almost exactly 100 years since the death of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson who, better known as Lewis Carroll, was perhaps the greatest writer of books for children in the history of English literature. By any reckoning, Alice's Adventures In Wonderland and Through The Looking Glass are two of the strangest and most original works of fiction to emerge from that strange and original time known as Victorian England.

Unusually, Carroll's books were spotted as classics right away. He was also fortunate to have secured John Tenniel, the greatest political cartoonist of his day, as his reluctant illustrator. But it was the crotchety, aphoristic, logic-chopping tenor of Carroll's literary voice that caught the Victorian reader's imagination.

Carroll created an oddly appealing set of some of the worst-tempered characters imaginable — the Duchess, the White Rabbit, the Queen of Hearts, the Caterpillar, the Mock Turtle, the Dodo, the White Knight and the Red Queen, whose atrocious puns and donnish wordplay get quoted in speeches more regularly than any other fictional archetypes. Alice herself is a thoroughly annoying seven going on nine-year-old: perplexing, contrary, questioning, clever-clever and, of course, always right. None of this has stopped her becoming a universal object of affection.

The popularity of Alice has not been confined to English-speaking countries. Carroll's work has been translated into virtually every language, including Swahili, Welsh, Latin and Aboriginal Pitjantjara, and has generated a quite astonishing volume of critical exegesis. For years the most reliable and popular textual commentary has been Martin Gardner's Annotated Alice. Gardner is an American who has devoted much of his life to elucidating the many mysteries of Wonderland and Looking Glass. But I think it's fitting that in this centenary year, Carroll's publishers, Macmillan, should have released an Alice Companion to challenge it.

To the Carroll *aficionado* there's much here that's familiar: Carroll's obsessive, year-round wearing of grey or black cotton gloves; the description of the writer as "austere, shy, precise, absorbed in mathematical reverie, watchfully tenacious of his dignity". That said, there's a mass of fascinating new arcana. I did not know, for example, that Bill the Lizard was a play on the name of Benjamin Disraeli. Again, it's intriguing to learn that the Walrus and the Carpenter is Carroll's not-so-gentle satire on the ideas of Walter Pater and John Ruskin, and that Tweedledum and Tweedledee were possibly modelled on Hallam and Lionel Tennyson, the Poet Laureate's reportedly ghastly sons.

THE ALICE Companion emphasises, above all, the degree to which the half-deaf and stuttering Carroll was the quintessential Oxford don, who had completed his eccentric masterpiece, Wonderland, at the surprisingly tender age of 32 and who, with the passage of time, became the Aged Aged Man of the White Knight's poem.

As fellow Oxonians, Gladstone and Elwyn Jones are indefatigable in their identification of every last scrap of Oxford gossip and politics to be found in Alice. They convincingly show that the Mad Hatter's Tea Party had its origins in a buttery dispute between Dean Liddell and his college.

What they are less good at is a characterisation of Carroll himself and, above all, of the profound mystery of his relationship with seven-year-old Alice Liddell, the chatty and gamine daughter of a celebrated classical lexicographer. Did he — as some have speculated — madly propose marriage? What did the pages torn from his journal confess? Why did Mrs Liddell banish him from the Deanery? Was Carroll, as Virginia Woolf claimed, a child who had never ceased to be one? Would he, today, find himself scrutinised by the police and the social services?

To begin to understand this, the enigmatic Carroll Question, you have to turn to Penguin's centenary edition of Alice (£3.99), which contains not only the illustrated texts of the Alice stories, but Carroll's manuscript original version, Alice's Adventures Under Ground, edited by Hugh Haughton. This superb new edition contains an introduction of such sympathetic brilliance towards the Carroll Question that almost all other commentary on the subject seems either shallow or superfluous.

To order The Alice Companion for £21 contact CultureShop (see details on page 33)

What Fatima would like to wear . . . Caute's novel takes on the incendiary subject of cultural integration

Satanic reverses

D J Taylor

Fatima's Scarf
by David Caute
Totterdown Books 560pp £15.99

THE publishing history of Fatima's Scarf comes hedged about with controversy. David Caute is a writer of some repute — Veronica, Or The Two Nations (1991) was a particularly sharp take on eighties Conservatism — and yet this, his 10th novel, was turned down by nearly every major publishing house in London. The reason given, or at any rate advanced by the author, was collective wariness of the theme — a kind of descant variation on the Salman Rushdie affair — whereupon Mr Caute, following what might be called the Mo precedent, resolved to publish it himself.

Much of this long and contentious item is set circa 1988-89 in the northern city of "Bruddersford", which older readers will perhaps remember from J B Priestley's The Good Companions. While a fair approximation of the Rushdie row is seething away in the background, here sparked off by an Egyptian novelist named "Gamal Rahman" and a novel called "The Devil: An Interview", its central confrontation grows out of the decision of a 15-year-old girl, the daughter of a local Muslim potentate, to flout the education committee's rulebook by donning the Islamic headgear of the title.

As the warring factions of Bruddersford's divided council chamber look on, it soon becomes clear that Fatima's gesture is ripe for exploitation: the local Labour party, desperately trying to head off a Muslim breakaway, gets ever more confused by what is, in effect, recent Pakistani politics replayed in West Yorkshire; the Muslim mayor meanwhile is scheming to supplant the sitting Labour MP; while the Tory opposition is simply out to make political capital. Cranked up by Rahman's almost nightly appearances on television, half-a-dozen other sub-plots, taking in themes of integration, racial and familial conflict, move busily into gear.

Sharply written — up to a point — Fatima's Scarf swiftly declares itself as a member of a rather old-fashioned genre, the "issue" novel. It is here, perhaps, that some of its problems as a novel, rather than as a rattling piece of satire, begin. However good his intentions, Caute can't help making his characters subordinate to the principles (or lack of them) they are intended to dramatise; a tendency to caricature tends to infect some of the walk-on parts (clerics with names like "Robin Goodgame"); and by the end, with blood all over the floor and plausibility blown to the skies, the novel fairly sinks beneath the weight of its lurid adhesions.

This isn't to deny the power of some of the individual scenes, in particular a rowdy school meeting at which three or four of the sub-plots snap shut like a row of suspenders, or Caute's implicit conclusion that no one — not enraged Islam, liberal apologists or the author of The Satanic Verses himself — emerged from the Rushdie affair with the slightest credit, merely to say that at 560 pages the proceedings inevitably acquire a slightly winded feel. At the same time, for Caute even to attempt a book of this kind — the sort of dense, political epic contemporary writers are always being urged to produce but somehow never do — is worth a round of applause in itself.

Going back to the reasons for its mass rejection, though, these are difficult times even for established writers, and you get the feeling that at least two or three of the craven publishing moguls denounced in the novel's early publicity may have offered editorial advice which Caute declined to take. Hats off to the author for having the courage to back his judgment, but if that advice touched on the question of length, it looks, for once, as if the wicked publishers were probably right.

Lord Fitzcricket's innings

Jeremy Treglown

Lord Berners: The Last Eccentric
by Mark Amory
Chatto & Windus 274pp £20

CLOSE to the Oxford-Swindon road, a Cubist but Gothic-tipped phallus sticks out of a wooded hillock above Faringdon. Rooms near the top command views over four counties. George Bernard Shaw, in old age, fantasised that he and his wife might be abandoned there by a restless host bored with his doddering guests: "While they are looking for the White Horse, he descends and leaves the country. Their skeletons are still in the tower."

The host was Gerald Berners. He had built the tower in the mid-1930s not — as loyal friends were to claim — as a 21st birthday present for his lover, Robert ("Mad Boy") Heber Percy, or as an act of job-creation during the Depression, but to annoy his nimby neighbours, especially a telescope-toting admiral.

"Neighbourtease" was one of the many idle pursuits which the 14th Baron followed with the commitment that less rich people are obliged to give to their careers. It was even his telegraphic address at Faringdon House: one of several features transferred wholesale by Nancy Mitford into The Pursuit Of Love, where Berners is Lord Merlin.

Another famous tease was to dye the pigeons at Faringdon pink, purple and yellow. Berners loved colour almost as much as practical jokes. In Rome, where he held down a first world war posting as a minor diplomat, he kept tin goldfish in bowls of blue and green water. These were the prettifications of an unpretty man — in appearance, somewhere between Groucho Marx and Clement Attlee. They were also part of what Mark Amory describes in his deft, enjoyable biography as "a flight from Victorian heaviness and emotion".

Berners was depressive, capable of an all-too-sharp sense of his own failings. Early in the 1940s, he wrote that his character was "utterly contemptible" and satirised himself in one of his novels as the "amateur and fundamentally superficial Lord Fitzcricket, who has "always led a self-centred, sheltered life" and whose "little world consists of my hobbies and my personal relationships".

Why should we be interested? Mark Amory has caught too much of his subject's whimsicality to attempt anything so gross as a critical claim, and at points he seems to wonder why he has got involved at all. Yet a lot emerges, if sometimes obliquely. First, Berners was the closest that Britain produced in his time to a modernist European composer. His Valses Bourgeoises contain what Stravinsky called "one of the most impudent passages in modern music" and were a hit at the 1923 Salzburg Festival. He wrote ballets for Diaghilev (The Triumph Of Neptune) and Frederick Ashton (including Foyer de Danse). Shortly before Berners' death, Sir Thomas Beecham described him as the greatest English composer; half a century later you can buy eight CDs of his work.

He was also a painter accomplished enough to be sold successfully by the Lefevre Gallery. And he wrote eight funny books, particularly The Girls Of Radcliff Hall, a spoof-a-clef on The Well Of Loneliness, and his autobiography First Childhood, with its memorable portraits of his relations.

Beyond all this, he had an exceptional gift for friendship, with the result that at times Amory's book becomes a latterday Brief Lives, dashing off sketches of Ronald Firbank, Gertrude Stein, Salvador Dali, the Sitwells, Max Beerbohm, the Betjemans . . . .

Berners managed an improbably durable relationship with the farouche Robert Heber Percy. That the two men stayed together was partly due to Berners' willed high spirits. Once, at a house party, Cecil Beaton asked where Heber Percy's room was. That night, Beaton crept in to be greeted by Berners in his notoriously unenticing nightcap, saying "Oh Cecil, this is so sudden".

Perhaps it is for the quality of his gayness, in both senses, that Gerald Berners most deserves to be remembered. He described his life as one which involved "the painstaking elimination of regret, remorse and the sense of guilt": no mean feat for anyone, ever, let alone a queer born in the reign of Queen Victoria. He was a true dilettante: one who not only took delight but gave it.

Buddha, can you spare a dime?

Anna Murphy

Scepticism Inc
by Bo Fowler
Jonathan Cape 247pp £9.99

THIS IS a book about the "nuttiness" of religion. It is set in the 21st century when the entrepreneurial Edgar Malroy, who doesn't believe, is making millions out of people who do. Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus queue up to bet on their particular tenets at his Scepticism Inc shops. An afternoon's gamblers might include a "Buddhist who wanted to place a £20 bet that Buddhist meditation will produce the conditions that allow a person to see absolute reality . . . an unemployed Pythagorean who wanted to bet £50 that numbers hold the key to the absolute . . . an old lady with four bags of shopping who bet £17.32 that David Icke was God's messenger".

Of course, they never win any money. What they do get is an "I placed my money where my metaphysics are" badge and, presumably, a cleansed soul. The Archbishop of Canterbury bankrupts the Church of England twice over, and world religions shut down by the dozen. Malroy meanwhile uses the profits to end poverty, stop wars, etc. It's all part of his plan for a "morality based on something physical rather than metaphysical".

This may sound oddly familiar. Scepticism Inc is a kind of Nietzsche for beginners, with Edgar Malroy as *über mensch* (he even has some of The Twilight Of The Idols tattooed on his *derrière*). Much fun is had at the expense of organised religion — its pettiness, its hypocrisy and, in Nietzschean terms, its amorality. Like all crib notes, the book lacks substance, but it does engage in interesting debates and cracks some good jokes en route. At its best, Scepticism Inc is refreshingly quick-witted; easy to read and easy to please, with thought-provoking ideas beneath the superficial make-believe. At its worst, however, it is just too self-consciously eccentric. Writing like a madman is all very well, but you have to wear a strait-jacket of some sort.

Literary lunacy should serve a purpose, even if it is only to raise a few laughs. Half the time, Fowler is rigorous in his ridiculousness but often, in the ever-proliferating subplots and asides, he become self-indulgent. The reader feels at best irritated, at worst alienated. By the end of Scepticism Inc, you can't help thinking that Fowler is at least as nuts as the objects of his satire.

Football League round-up

Highbury faithful spurred on by dreams of treble chance

Guardian Reporters

SUCH is the end-of-term euphoria at Highbury that Arsenal fans can be heard discussing the chances of a "treble" for the north London side.

Having secured a place in next month's FA Cup final against Newcastle United, Arsène Wenger's men took another step towards the Premiership title last Saturday with a 5-0 demolition of Wimbledon. By half-time the Gunners were 3-0 up, thanks to goals from Tony Adams, Marc Overmars and Dennis Bergkamp. Emmanuel Petit and Christopher Wreh completed the job after the break.

At Old Trafford, Newcastle United dented Manchester United's hopes of retaining their crown with a 1-1 draw. Andreas Andersson put Newcastle in front, but David Beckham equalised before half-time. A frantic second-half culminated in Ole Gunnar Solskjaer being shown the red card for bringing down Robert Lee when the Newcastle midfielder had a clear run on goal.

Arsenal, with two games in hand, need to win only three of their last five games to be champions. At the bottom, the chances of achieving their "treble" with the relegation of arch-rivals Tottenham Hotspur receded slightly after Spurs secured a 1-1 draw against fellow strugglers Barnsley at Oakwell.

In the First Division, Nottingham Forest remain in pole position despite being held to a 2-2 draw by Stockport County. They are six points ahead of their nearest rivals — Sunderland, Charlton and Middlesbrough — all of whom are locked together on 84 points.

In the Second Division, the only prize left to play for is a place in the play-offs, Bristol City and Watford having already secured a berth in Division One for next season. Kevin Keegan's Fulham remain third in spite of losing to relegation candidates Burnley 2-1 at Turf Moor.

In the Third Division, champions Notts County defeated third-placed Torquay 3-0 at Meadow Lane. Macclesfield, 2-1 winners over Cardiff, remain second.

Results and tables

AUTO WINDSCREENS: Final: Bournemouth 1, Grimsby 2 (1-1 at 90 minutes).

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Arsenal 5, Wimbledon 0; Barnsley 1, Tottenham 1; Bolton 2, Leeds 3; Chelsea 1, Sheff Wed 0; Coventry City 1, Liverpool 1; Crystal Palace 3, Derby 1; Everton 1, Leicester 1; Man Utd 1, Newcastle Utd 1; Southampton 1, Aston Villa 2; West Ham 2, Blackburn 1.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Division One: Birmghm 3, Swindon 0; Bradford C 1, QPR 1; Charlton 1, Portsmth 0, Huddersfld 1, West Brom 0; Ipswich 5, Port Vale 1; Oxford 1, Tranmere Rovers 1; Sheff Utd 3, Bury 0. Stockport 2, Nottm For 2; Stoke 2, Norwich 0; Sunderland 2, Crewe 1; Wolves 3, Reading 1

Division Two: Brentford 0, Wigan 2; Bristol R 2, Luton 1; Burnley 2, Fulham 1; Chesterfld 1, Bristol City 0; Gillingham 1, Wrexham 1; Plymouth 1, Northmptn 3; Preston 3, Blackpool 3; Walsall 0, Oldham 0; Wycombe 0, Millwall 0; York 1, Southend 1.

Division Three: Barnet 1, Scarboro 1, Cambridge 4, Swansea 1; Cardiff 1, Macclesfld 2, Chester 3, Colchester 1; Hull 3, Leyton O 2; Lincoln 3, Peterboro 0; Mansfield 2, Hartlepool 2; Notts County 3, Torquay 0, Rochdale 3, Exeter 0; Rotherham 3, Doncaster 0, Sc'thorpe 1, Darlington 0, Shrewsbury 2, Brighton 1.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Aberdeen 1, Rangers 0; Celtic 4, Motherwell 1; Dunfermline 1, Hibernian 1; Hearts 1, St Johnstone 1; Kilmarnock 1, Dundee U 0.

First Division: Dundee 1, Ayr 1; Hamilton 1, Falkirk 2; Stirling Albion 0, Partick 1; St Mirren 0, Raith 2.

Second Division: East Fife 0, Clydebank 2; Forfar 2, Queen Sth 4; Livingston 1, Brechin 0; Stenhsmr 1, Clyde 1; Stranraer 3, Inverness CT 1.

Third Division: Berwick 2, Queens Pk 2; Dumbarton 2, Albion 0; E Stirling 2, Cowdenbeath 1; Montrose 0, Alloa 3; Ross Co 1, Arbroath 0.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Arsenal	33	20	9	4	61	26	69
Man Utd	35	20	8	7	65	26	68
Liverpool	34	16	11	7	58	37	59
Chelsea	34	18	3	13	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Leeds	35	17	6	12	53	39	57
West Ham	34	16	7	12	47	42	52
Blackburn	34	14	9	11	55	50	51
Aston Villa	35	16	5	14	44	44	51
Derby	34	14	7	13	49	44	49
Leicester	34	11	13	10	43	37	46
Coventry	34	11	13	10	40	40	46
Southampton	35	13	5	17	45	50	44
Wimbledon	34	10	11	13	31	39	41
Sheff Wed	35	11	8	16	48	62	41
Newcastle	34	10	10	14	32	40	40
Everton	35	9	12	14	39	48	39
Tottenham	35	9	10	16	35	53	37
Barnsley	35	10	5	20	37	77	35
Bolton	35	7	13	15	33	56	34
Crystal Palace	34	7	8	19	31	60	29

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

Division One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Nottm Forest	44	27	9	8	80	41	90
Sunderland	43	24	12	7	81	47	84
Charlton	44	25	9	10	78	49	84
Middlesbrough	43	25	9	9	71	39	84
Ipswich	43	20	14	9	71	41	74
Sheff Utd	42	19	16	7	63	44	73
Birmingham	44	18	16	10	58	35	70
Wolverhampton	43	18	10	15	52	46	64
Stockport	44	17	8	19	68	66	59
Oxford Utd	44	16	10	18	59	58	58
Bradford	44	14	15	15	45	51	57
West Brom	44	15	12	17	45	53	57
Huddersfield	44	14	11	19	50	65	53
Crewe	43	16	5	22	49	61	53
Tranmere	43	13	13	17	49	51	52
Swindon	44	14	10	20	41	66	52
Norwich	44	12	13	19	46	69	49
Bury	44	10	19	15	41	57	49
QPR	44	10	18	16	49	60	48
Port Vale	44	12	10	22	52	65	46
Stoke	44	11	13	20	42	66	46
Man City	44	11	11	22	49	53	44
Portsmouth	44	11	10	23	45	62	43
Reading	44	11	9	24	39	76	42

Division Two

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Bristol City	44	24	10	10	66	36	82
Watford	43	22	15	6	63	39	81
Fulham	44	20	10	14	59	40	70
Grimsby	43	18	14	11	54	35	68
Bristol Rovers	44	19	10	15	68	62	67
Northampton	44	17	16	11	51	37	67
Wrexham	44	17	15	12	52	50	66
Gillingham	44	18	12	14	51	47	66
Chesterfield	44	16	16	13	44	42	63
Bournemouth	43	16	12	15	62	48	60
Blackpool	44	16	10	18	57	66	58
Wigan	43	16	9	18	62	66	57
Wycombe	44	13	17	14	49	52	56
Preston	44	14	13	17	54	55	55
York	44	13	16	15	50	57	55
Oldham	43	13	15	15	55	51	54
Walsall	43	14	12	17	42	47	54
Millwall	44	14	12	18	42	52	54
Luton	44	13	14	17	56	60	53
Plymouth	44	12	13	19	54	67	49
Brentford	44	11	16	17	47	67	49
Burnley	43	12	12	19	49	59	48
Carlisle	43	12	8	23	54	67	44
Southend	44	11	10	23	46	74	43

Division Three

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Notts County	44	28	11	5	75	39	95
Macclesfield	44	21	13	10	57	41	76
Torquay	44	20	11	13	64	56	71
Colchester	44	20	10	14	70	69	70
Scarborough	44	19	13	12	66	57	70
Barnet	44	19	13	12	60	48	70
Lincoln City	43	18	14	11	54	47	68
Rotherham	44	16	18	10	63	54	66
Peterborough	44	18	12	14	62	48	66
Scunthorpe	43	17	12	14	52	50	63
Exeter	43	15	15	13	65	56	60
Shrewsbury	44	16	12	16	61	60	60
Chester	44	17	9	18	57	57	60
Mansfield	44	14	17	13	62	55	59
Cambridge Utd	44	14	17	13	61	54	59
Leyton Orient	43	17	11	15	58	45	59
Hartlepool	44	11	22	11	59	53	55
Rochdale	44	16	6	22	52	52	54
Darlington	44	14	10	20	54	70	52
Swansea	44	13	10	21	49	61	49
Cardiff	44	9	22	13	48	50	49
Hull	44	10	7	27	53	81	37
Brighton	44	6	16	22	36	62	34
Doncaster	44	4	7	33	30	112	19

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE

Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Celtic	33	21	6	6	61	23	69
Rangers	33	19	9	5	71	[illegible]	[illegible]
Hearts	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	66	41	63
Kilmarnock	33	11	10	12	36	50	43
St Johnstone	33	11	9	13	33	38	42
Aberdeen	33	8	11	14	34	48	35
Dundee Utd	33	7	13	13	40	46	34
Motherwell	33	9	7	17	42	56	34
Dunfermline	33	7	12	14	39	64	33
Hibernian	33	6	10	17	36	56	28

First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Dundee	33	20	10	3	52	19	70
Falkirk	33	17	8	8	52	39	59
Raith	33	16	9	8	49	30	57
Airdrie	33	13	12	8	39	35	51
Gr Morton	33	10	10	13	43	47	40
Hamilton	33	9	10	14	42	51	37
St Mirren	33	9	8	16	39	52	35
Ayr	33	8	10	15	35	62	34
Partick	33	7	11	15	41	52	32
Stirling	33	7	10	16	39	54	31

Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Livingston	33	16	10	7	54	35	58
Clydebank	33	15	11	7	41	27	56
Stranraer	33	16	7	10	57	41	55
Queen of South	33	13	8	12	53	48	47
East Fife	33	13	6	14	48	55	45
Forfar	33	11	9	13	49	59	42
Inverness Cal.	33	10	10	13	60	50	40
Stenhousemuir	33	10	9	14	41	48	39
Clyde	33	8	12	13	37	52	36
Brechin	33	7	10	16	39	64	31

Third Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Alloa	33	21	4	8	69	36	67
Arbroath	32	18	6	8	59	35	60
Ross County	33	16	10	7	61	34	58
East Stirling	33	17	5	11	45	37	56
Albion	32	12	5	15	53	62	41
Queen's Park	33	9	10	14	39	49	37
Berwick	33	8	12	13	40	52	36
Cowdenbeath	33	11	2	20	29	51	35
Montrose	33	9	8	16	47	71	35
Dumbarton	33	7	10	16	39	54	31

European Cup Winners' Cup, semi-final, 2nd leg: Chelsea 3 Vicenza 1 (agg: 3-2)



Chelsea veteran Mark Hughes celebrates his winning goal against Vicenza PHOTO: KEVIN LAMARQUE

Spark of genius fires Blues

Martin Thorpe at Stamford Bridge

CHELSEA won through to the final last week after a comeback of heroic proportions was sealed by a player, aptly nicknamed Sparky, who is no stranger to such stirring deeds after a long and distinguished career.

Mark Hughes, 34 now and often on the bench in the twilight of his playing days, proved once again that there is no substitute for class and experience when the pressure is on as he carved the winning goal out of nothing 14 minutes from time.

Stockholm and a final against Stuttgart, 3-1 aggregate winners over Lokomotiv Moscow, on May 13 is the team's reward as they try to emulate the feat of the class of '71, the last Chelsea team to win a European trophy, in this same competition.

The general level of football was nothing special but no one noticed as the tension and atmosphere of the evening overtook even the most dispassionate observer.

This was especially so when, on 32 minutes, the home crowd's initial hope turned to rampant anxiety as Chelsea suffered the setback they most dreaded and allowed Vicenza, 1-0 up from the first leg, to score. Gianluca Vialli's men were now set the onerous task of scoring three times to secure the tie.

Vicenza's goal presented a vivid demonstration of how the Italians had come not just to defend their first-leg lead but were prepared to pour forward in numbers whenever the occasion allowed.

As the ball came across the Chelsea area there were no fewer than three Vicenza players on hand, all positioned perfectly to inflict maximum damage. In the end Lamberto Zauli's pass found Pasquale Luiso on the right of the area and the striker promptly dispatched the ball wide of Ed De Goey's despairing dive.

To Chelsea's credit they hit back three minutes later. Graeme Le Saux broke down the left and passed inside to Gianfranco Zola who unleashed a shot from about 20 yards which the Vicenza goalkeeper Pierluigi Brivio could only push out to Gustavo Poyet, who struck the ball into the net.

The big Uruguayan had scored on his last start too, although that was on October 5, after which he picked up a cruciate ligament injury which has since kept him out of action. This was the perfect welcome-back present.

But when Frank Leboeuf cleared off the line from Luiso close to half-time Chelsea went into the break with much to ponder.

The power of the mind, plus a few well-chosen words from the coach no doubt, worked wonders. Chelsea emerged for the second half with thoughts concentrated and spirit recharged, and set about attacking Vicenza with a vigour born of necessity.

Six minutes after the restart Chelsea reaped their reward. Vialli picked up the ball wide on the right and unzipped a cross of accuracy and pace that fell perfectly for Zola, running in, to head past Brivio. The Italians had been undone by fellow Italians.

Vialli went close with a bicycle kick, but by midway through the second half the vital third goal had not arrived — in fact Gustavo Mendez had gone closest for Vicenza with a header wide.

So Graham Rix, Chelsea's boss in the dug-out, further increased his team's attacking edge by bringing on Hughes to join Vialli and Zola up front.

It turned out to be the proverbial tactical masterstroke. De Goey launched an innocuous-looking clearance deep into the Vicenza half. Hughes made use of the bounce to head the ball beyond the defender Dominico Di Carlo and fire home an exquisite left-foot volley from the left side of the area.

Joy in the stadium was unconfined. But still it needed another act of defiance from De Goey to prevent Chelsea's win being snatched from them seconds before the end when the keeper managed to loud Arturo Di Napoli's cross away from the waiting feet of Luiso.

On the final whistle Chelsea's other hero, Hughes, lay concussed on the ground, put there by an Italian elbow off the ball. But Sparky probably did not care. He had already inflicted the knock-out blow that mattered.

Football

Rangers are dazzled by Glass

Patrick Glenn

RANGERS' pursuit of a decade of dominating the Scottish championship was severely hampered by a 28th-minute goal from Stephen Glass and the second-half dismissal of Lorenzo Amoruso at Pittodrie last Sunday.

Now three points behind Celtic in the Scottish Premier league with three matches remaining, the Ibrox side looked for most of a rigorous game as though they had emptied their cupboard during their two recent victories over Celtic.

The Rangers manager Walter Smith called the 1-0 result "disappointing" and said his players had let themselves down in the first half.

There was a general sluggishness about their play upon which Aberdeen zestfully capitalised. When Amoruso was ordered off in the 59th minute, with the visitors already a goal down, their task became too much.

With Alex Cleland, Gordon Durie, Jonas Thern and Stuart McCall drawing bookings on top of the Amoruso dismissal, it was also a bad day on the disciplinary front for the champions.

That Rangers would have trouble was obvious from early in the game, when Aberdeen demonstrated an energy and commitment that has been missing often enough this season to leave them threatened with relegation. This result leaves them free of anxiety.

By the time Glass produced the goal the home side were already ahead in thought, movement and execution. They had forced a diving save from Andy Goram, who had to tip away Billy Dodds's left-foot shot after the striker had been released into the left side of the penalty area by Glass's measured pass.

The move which brought the goal was quick and decisive. Mike Newell, returning after a two-month absence because of injury, gathered possession on the left and chipped a pass long to Ricky Gillies on the right.

The young forward saw Glass with only the diminutive McCall for company inside the area and his cross was perfectly delivered. Glass sent the header from 10 yards high to the right of Goram.

Aberdeen had several good performers, with Jamie Buchan, son of the former Manchester United captain Martin, the outstanding contributor with a forceful display in midfield.

Rangers, with Brian Laudrup once again indecisive and ineffective, were uncharacteristically without menace, even on those occasions when they did manage to push towards Jim Leighton. With two of their three games away from home, they would appear to have a severe job in retaining the championship.

Celtic's recovery from the numbing disappointment of defeat by Rangers was impressively quick and complete. Motherwell, potentially harmful visitors to Parkhead, were seen off the premises with a 4-1 defeat.

Skipper Lawrie Smith at the helm of Silk Cut PHOTO: STEPHEN MUNDAY

Sailing Whitbread Round the World Race

Smith is ready for the chase

Bob Fisher

THE 870-mile seventh leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race, from Fort Lauderdale to Baltimore, which started last Sunday, will give Lawrie Smith and the crew of Silk Cut the chance to prove that their win in the previous leg was no fluke.

Smith is convinced Silk Cut can achieve a podium place by the time the race finishes in Southampton. "We could have been second now if we hadn't lost our mast on leg five," he said. "We were leading at the time. We have the speed to beat the rest; we just need the breaks."

With Paul Cayard and EF Language so far out in front, anything but second place by the time the race is over is unrealistic.

Smith is working with his navigator Vincent Geake, who only joined the boat after four legs, and his confidence has been repaid. It was Geake's call to stay right approaching Barbuda on the last leg which put Silk Cut 20 miles ahead of EF Language. Smith said: "We were able to free off round the island while the others struggled to make it."

There will be two new skippers for this leg: George Collins is back with Chessie Racing — he skippered the boat he owns on legs three and four before handing back to Dee Smith for the fifth leg — and Dennis Conner has returned to take joint command of Toshiba with Paul Standbridge. The early part of the leg can be a gear-buster with a fierce Gulf Stream current possibly battling a brisk nor'-easter. It would cause short, sharp seas which Conner expected, "will be tough at 10 knots to windward".

If the wind is fair, however, this could be an exceedingly quick leg, and if the wind is hard enough — and it was close to it on occasion last week — the 449.1 miles, 24-hour record of Silk Cut could be toppled. But there will still be the slow part of the leg in Chesapeake Bay.

EF Language, on 608 points, has a massive 115 point lead over Gunnar Krantz's second-placed Swedish Match, and there are only 105 points available to the winner of the seventh leg. So whatever happens, EF Language will still lead going into the penultimate eighth leg, which starts on May 4.

Grant Dalton's Merit Cup is third, 16 points astern of Swedish Match, but 23 ahead of Chessie Racing and five more clear of Innovation Kvaerner. In sixth place is Silk Cut while Toshiba is seventh after losing all her points for the Cape Horn leg following disqualification.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Hamed retains title with a great victory

NASEEM HAMED retained his World Boxing Organisation featherweight crown with a seventh-round stoppage of Puerto Rican Wilfredo Vazquez at the Nynex Arena in Manchester.

The 23-year-old champion from Sheffield gave the most polished performance of his career by biding his time against the rugged, 37-year-old veteran of 22 world title fights before moving in for a clinical finish. He was always in control and put the challenger on the canvas four times.

On the same bill, Chris Eubank lost to local boy Carl Thompson in a gruelling, 12-round fight for the WBO cruiser-weight title. The 31-year-old took a lot of punishment but kept intact his 12-year record of not being stopped.

After the defeat, Eubank, the former middle- and super-middle weight champion, was taken to hospital for a brain scan, which revealed no damage, and treatment to a badly cut left eye.

Hamed: polished performance

TEGLA LOROUPE fulfilled the prophecy of Ingrid Kristiansen when she reduced the women's world marathon record to 2hr 20min 47sec in Rotterdam. The 26-year-old Kenyan, barely 5ft tall, sliced 19 seconds off the mark set by the great Norwegian runner in London 13 years ago. "In 1996, when I met Ingrid in New York, she told me that one day I would break her record," Loroupe said.

Moses Tanui continued his country's remarkable streak to win the Boston marathon for the second time in three years, giving Kenya its eighth consecutive winner.

HALIFAX returned to the Football League after five seasons in the Vauxhall Conference. They beat Kidderminster 2-0, with Geoff Horsfield putting them ahead just before half-time. And when Jamie Patterson got the second 10 minutes from time with a 20-yard drive, the 1,500 Halifax supporters went into raptures and began celebrating.

At Wembley, Grimsby Town won their first trophy in 18 years when they beat Bournemouth 2-1 to lift the Auto Windscreen Shield. The scores were level at 1-1 after 90 minutes, so the game had to go into extra time. Wayne Burnett got Grimsby's "golden goal" with eight minutes left.

REAL MADRID, European champions a record six times, cruised into their 10th European Cup final when they held Borussia Dortmund to a goalless draw in Germany. The Spaniards, 2-0 up from the first leg, played a containing game, but holders Dortmund rarely posed any serious threat.

Real's opponents in Amsterdam on May 20 will be Juventus, for whom it will be their third successive appearance in the final. The Italians withstood a determined fightback by Monaco. Nicola Amoruso swept Juventus 5-1 ahead on aggregate, but Philippe Leonard quickly levelled the score and Thierry Henry put Monaco 2-1 up on the night before Alessandro Del Piero struck for Juventus. Robert Spehar restored Monaco's lead, but it was too late to stop Juventus booking their place in the final, 6-4 on aggregate.

GLENN HODDLE is leaving nothing to chance in his build-up to the World Cup in France. He revealed that three-quarters of his England squad have had consultations with his faith healer, Eileen Drewery. "People who ridicule this sort of thing have got closed minds," said the England coach.

Meanwhile French World Cup organisers have set up special phone lines to dispose of the 110,000 extra tickets they agreed to release for the June tournament. The tickets are earmarked for supporters from the European Community.

MICHAEL DOOHAN, the 32-year-old world motor-cycling legend from Australia, produced a flawless performance in the Malaysian Grand Prix in Pasir Gudang to clinch his first 500cc GP win of the season. Doohan, four times the world champion, rode his Honda to a winning time of 45min 15.53 sec. Carlos Checa of Spain was second, and Italy's Max Biaggi came third.

WITH rain, snow and some of the worst flooding on record, a new cricket season got off to a soggy start in England. The start of the match between Cambridge university and Northamptonshire was heavily curtailed at Fenners — marking its 150th year as a cricketing venue. At The Parks, Sussex ended the first day on 182-4 against Oxford university. The second and third days at both grounds were washed out.

JOHN MAJOR will take over as the president of Surrey cricket club next year after being elected deputy to Micky Stewart. Stewart, a club member for 50 years, was elected at the club's annual meeting, with Major unanimously endorsed as his understudy. "I've been an avid follower of Surrey cricket for 45 years, and am delighted to put something back into the county that has given me such pleasure for so long," said Britain's former prime minister.

THE world of snooker was mourning the passing of Fred Davis, who died at his home in Denbigh, North Wales. Davis won eight world snooker titles in the nine years between 1948 and 1957, and was also a world champion at billiards.